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PRESENTED BY

JOHN CODMAN ROPES

A MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF

JOHN CODMAN ROPES, LL.D.

WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF
VARIOUS SOCIETIES
ADDRESSES, PAPERS, AND RESOLUTIONS
IN COMMEMORATION
OF HIM

BOSTON: PRIVATELY PRINTED
MDCCCCI

P.

William Ropes Trask

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With the Compliments of William Ropes Trask

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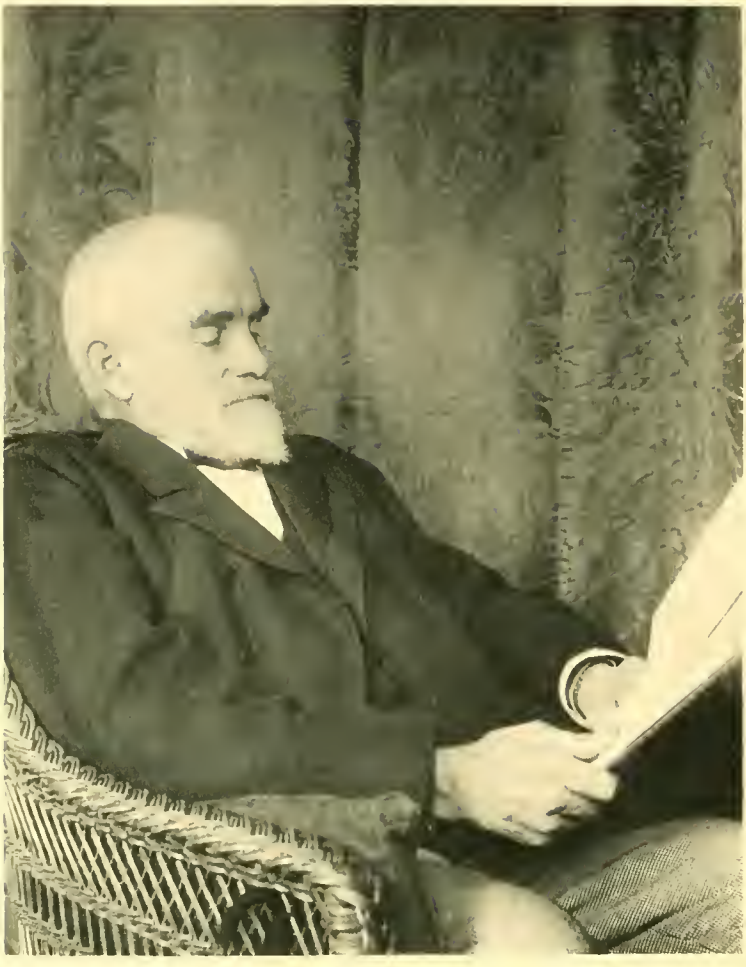
JOHN CODMAN ROPES, LL.D.

A MEMOIR

BY HIS FRIEND AND CLASSMATE

JOSEPH MAY



JOHN CODMAN ROPES, LL.D.[1]

A MEMOIR BY JOSEPH MAY

JOHN CODMAN ROPES was the son of William Ropes, who during a long business career did honor to the title "merchant of Boston."

William Ropes was a native of Salem, where his ancestors had been merchants for several generations. As was the custom of the times, he went in his youth as supercargo on repeated voyages to India, China, and elsewhere, gaining a knowledge of commerce, of seamanship, and of foreign countries, and becoming at length the owner of vessels and head of a commercial house.

About the year 1830, when fully in middle life, and it would appear in consequence of some partial business reverses, Mr. Ropes emigrated to Russia, where he remained about seven years, establishing in St. Petersburg a mercantile house which still exists.

Before his departure from home, Mr. Ropes had united himself, in a second marriage, with Mary Anne, daughter of Hon. John Codman, an eminent merchant and citizen of Boston, residing at the head of Hanover Street.[2]

Mrs. Ropes, with several step-children, accompanied her husband to Russia, and in St. Petersburg, on April 28, 1836, her first son was born, the subject of this sketch. A year later the family removed to London, where Mr.

[1] *Mr. Ropes received the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1897.*

[2] *Mr. Codman's second son and namesake, older half-brother of Mrs. Ropes, was the somewhat celebrated minister of Dorchester, prominent in the theological controversies of the times.*

Ropes established a branch house; and in 1842, he returned to Boston, pursuing there a highly successful business career until he died in 1869, at the age of eighty-five.

William Ropes was a merchant of the old school; a man of great sagacity and resolution; of rigid and transparent integrity; of simple, unaffected piety; of a most cheerful and affectionate disposition; abounding in hospitality, charity, and public spirit. He retained to the last the vigorous health which his early life of activity and exposure had fortified, and with his short but erect figure, his abundant, fine, silvery hair, florid countenance, bright, ready smile, and brisk and cordial manners, was the very type of a hale old gentleman.

Mrs. Ropes possessed the highest native refinement, and had enjoyed in a luxurious home exceptional opportunities of culture. She maintained through life an eager appetite for general knowledge and curiosity on the great doctrinal themes hotly debated in her day. She was by nature fastidious and shy, but dignified and cordial, even merry; of warm and steady affections and quick sensibility. Her intellect was vigorous, and very independent in its workings. She mastered the subjects with which she grappled, and her conclusions, by whatever process reached, were her own. Her husband's robust nature reappeared in the moral and mental vigor and alertness which were so characteristic of his children; to their mother they owed an underlying fineness of intellect and their love of literature and the arts; to both, and to careful systematic education, their religious thoughtfulness, their high principles, and their active interest in moral and social questions.

Of the children of William Ropes's second marriage

there were five: Catherine Codman, born in St. Petersburg, and dying there as a little child; John Codman; Francis Codman, born October 7, 1837, and Henry, born May 16, 1839, both in Islington, near London; Mary Anne, born July 14, 1842, in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Francis, a graduate of the class of 1857, and a physician and surgeon of distinguished capacity and promise, died at the early age of thirty-two; Henry, of the class of 1862, gave up his life upon the field of Gettysburg.

The home in which these children were reared was one of the truest, noblest, and happiest; abundant without luxury, every genuine need of physical and mental culture was supplied in it, but the sources of robust character were not sapped. Religion was its characteristic pervading influence, but with little of austerity. Some forms of amusement were tabooed by orthodox discipline, but these were not many and the best were left. The parents of Mrs. Ropes were members of Federal Street Church, and intimate friends of Rev. Dr. Channing. But something had proved wanting for the daughter in the religious culture she had received, and the private, even secret, perusal of Calvinistic literature, discovered in her father's library, had confirmed her mind in a disposition to the orthodox forms of thought. It was a source of satisfaction to her, in uniting herself in marriage with Mr. Ropes, that he had adhered to the conservative wing of the Congregational body. She entered into that communion, in which her husband had long been eminent for zeal and activity, and they remained associated with it until, about 1860, they united with the Episcopal church.

But natural largeness of mind, and the very genuineness of their religious sentiments, defended them from all

bigotry. Deeply earnest in their feelings, they were instinctively liberal towards those whose convictions differed from their own. For the husband the subtleties of theology had indeed but little attraction. A few cardinal principles composed his simple creed, defended his moral life, and made his artless devotional exercises in his home peculiarly affecting. Mrs. Ropes entered more deeply into the intricacies of the orthodox theology, and accepted the system with a consistency which at times made the burden heavy for her heart. But she was as candid as she was earnest. For her, and for her husband, religion was a practical interest of life, too real to be given over to formality and too natural for conventionality or asceticism. Its sincerity and simplicity in themselves, the manifest happiness, dignity, and moral security which it fostered in them, recommended it to their children and won them permanently to it. For John Codman Ropes it was, throughout life, the supreme subject of concern, with which his mind habitually conversed.

In 1849 William Ropes removed his abode from the hired house which he had occupied at 32 Chestnut Street to 92 Beacon Street, opposite the Public Garden, a house which he had built. Here his home remained until his death, a centre of hospitality and cheerful domesticity. One or two of his older children were still members of his family. There reigned among all the most open confidence and warmest family affection, reflecting the perfect married union of the parents. The physical vigor which all enjoyed; the mental activity and independence which peculiarly characterized them; their lively dispositions and hearty interest in all forms of culture and in the mooted questions of an intense period of our national life, made their family intercourse exceptionally enter-

taining and stimulating. The handsome and bountiful table, where old-fashioned decorum yielded not a little to the irrepressible spirits of vigorous youth, and their eager interest in the topics that easily cropped up in such a circle for discussion, afforded a beautiful spectacle of domestic happiness. Many a guest of varied quality, from the captain of one of the father's ships to the divine in whose conversation the mother especially found edification, sat there and stimulated by his talk the ready curiosity of the bright and rapidly maturing minds of the children. High debate, ready laughter, abounded. It was a home full of good cheer, serious purpose, culture, kindness, mutual affection, charity, true piety.

The boys and their sister were educated according to the best standards of the time, and as they grew, availed themselves more diligently and systematically than is often the case, of the means of culture offered by libraries, lyceum lectures, concerts, and the like agencies. John Ropes, especially, was addicted to literature from his earliest days. His mother said he seemed to have been born with a book in his hand, and in a very early portrait he is so represented. He had a lively disposition; all his life he was fond of jollity and song. But he was soberly thoughtful always. He took life seriously from the first. His mind moved constantly on important themes, practical and theoretic. A serious question had a certain intellectual and even moral sanctity for him. To leave it open, if it could be solved, was a sort of offence to right which always left his mind restless. Correspondingly, when determined, a result was deeply fixed, and it was difficult to dislodge or modify it, so thorough was the process by which he came to each conclusion. This thoroughness of mind affected his habits of reading in a

marked manner. They were never desultory. "Miscellaneous" reading he abhorred. He had a peculiar antipathy to encyclopædias and "works of reference." Except novels, of which in later years he read many, purely for mental recreation, he paid almost no attention at all to light or general literature. As a matter of culture, he was made acquainted in youth with the great poets of old, and the more popular of later days. But poetry was never an important element in his mental life. Wordsworth and Bryant were the only modern poets in whom he took real interest. The essayists he read eclectically, but the older with more regard than the later. For Dr. Johnson he had almost a personal attachment. He used to say, "Whatever any man thinks of Dr. Johnson, every one is glad to have him on his side."

The precise fact was that, for Mr. Ropes, reading was in a peculiar manner and very strictly a means, not an end. He read on the particular lines in which his thought was moving, to gain facts or to clarify ideas. It thus occurred that, when quite a youth, his reading became somewhat narrowly specialized. Throughout life, theology and history, including biography, covered nearly its whole field.

The same practicality entered into all the action of Mr. Ropes's mind and appeared in personal intercourse. He loved amusements and the lively banter of hours of recreation. But in mere talk for talk's sake, in a conversation which did not turn on important questions or tend to enucleate important truth, he lost interest and became silent. All the real action of his mind was practical.

With his brother, Francis Codman, John was for some years a pupil at the Chauncy Hall School, which he entered in 1843 under the well-known masters Thayer

and Cushing. Of that school he says:[1] "Not enforcing a discipline so rigid as that of many of our public schools, it for that reason gave more scope to individual endeavor; and though, in attention to the elegancies of scholarship (which, by the way, are thrown away on the majority of boys), it was surpassed by some of its contemporaries, yet it taught well what it professed to teach, and afforded as good opportunities for the acquisition of the rudiments of an education, which are all that boys can learn, as any school in the city." The parenthetical observation of this passage illustrates the practicality of mind to which we have referred. But practicality was not the only side of it; and as it existed in him it was that of the devotee of truth and reality, not of mundane affairs.

On account of a developing trouble of the spine, Ropes was withdrawn from school in the autumn of 1850 and put under orthopædic treatment. A year later he was able to resume study, and became the pupil of Mr. William W. Goodwin, then a tutor in college, now the distinguished professor of Greek. He took the greatest satisfaction in the two years spent under Mr. Goodwin's tutelage, from which he passed to college in the summer of 1853, accompanied by his brother Francis.

Of his freshman year, Ropes retained no very pleasant impressions. He and his brother had engaged a room remote from the college, and they made few acquaintances. In the second term John had a somewhat long illness. On the whole, it was a dreary time. In sophomore year, having removed nearer the buildings, acquaintanceship with his class increased, and he "found

[1] *In a fragmentary sketch of his life written at twenty-one and revised for the Class Book of 1857.*

Cambridge life very cheerful and pleasant, as I have found it ever since." From this time on, he grew in influence and popularity in his class and in college. By virtue of his excellent preparation, he early took a good rank in the classics and mathematics, but his greater interest was (poorly as they were taught) in what were summarily called "the English branches," and his range of thought and reading was largely outside the narrow compass of the regular curriculum. For the majority of students, metaphysics, political economy, moral philosophy, logic, and rhetoric, as taught in that day, were a jejune and dreary task-work. Professor Bowen was doubtless clear and thorough, and occasionally a gleam of humor illumined his exercises. But history, owing partly to a prolonged hiatus in the professorship, was, at least until senior year, little better than a farce. The recitation-method and marking-system still in vogue, put a premium on *memoriter* performances, and deadened real interest in all these subjects. Only Dr. Walker, already President but still taking charge of some courses and occasionally appearing in others, brought with him a more liberal spirit, and gave life to the usually tiresome experiences of the class-rooms. But not even he could make freshmen generally interested in Paley's Evidences! Ropes was much alone in caring for most of these subjects, in some of which home training had already led him to take an interest. For a year or two, besides his college work, he belonged to a Bible-class conducted by the minister of the Congregational church. But while he always maintained reasonable diligence in required studies, his mind was more and more engaged in private reading and thinking. As has been remarked, he was far from being an omnivorous reader; but in col-

lege, as throughout life, he read *much* because he read reflectively and with an end always in view. He cared for books only as the depositories of knowledge and aids to thought. He had none of that love for the volumes themselves which is apt to mark the literary man, and never became ambitious to acquire a large and complete library. While not appearing to read rapidly, he had a singular power of gathering what a book contained—for him—and always proved to know more, even of general literature, than he had seemed to be acquiring. His tenacious memory utilized all that it appropriated. It was not merely tenacious, however, but in a singular manner selective. He retained only what was valuable for his purposes. His mind curiously defended itself against the accumulation of miscellaneous *impedimenta* of knowledge. Some great departments—as natural science, for example—he left wholly on one side, respecting them, but never pretending to care for them.

In the fields where he was at home he fixedly appropriated what he wanted, and the rest appeared wholly to drop out of his mind. In history, where his knowledge became so remarkable, it was chiefly confined within somewhat narrow limits. Yet he always seemed to have, in a latent fund, as much general information as he cared to possess, and whatever he had was always perfectly clear and accurate, and thorough so far as he had chosen to extend it. His grasp of what he had acquired had not the quality of memory; it was knowledge. It was impressed on his mind by a sort of photographic process. It never faded and was always instantly at command, like one's knowledge of the alphabet or multiplication-table. This tenacity extended to the smallest details that were of importance; to dates, localities, subordinate per-

sonalities; in military matters, to the numbers of troops, the identity of officers, the minutiæ of operations. Especially pleasing incidents of private experience, or those which for any reason had been of real significance, remained in full vividness and were recalled by date to the hour. But a vast mass of recollections to which most minds are subject, wholly failed to keep a lodgment in his. His capacity for totally forgetting was as remarkable as his power of retaining, and was an important condition of it. His mind thus visibly economized its forces to the greatest advantage.

Ropes's intellectual ability, the justness of his mind, and his cordiality of nature were speedily recognized in college, when his class had become acquainted with him. The excellence of his themes and forensics (especially the latter, in which sound reasoning was the matter of prime importance) led to his being elected one of the editors of the Harvard Magazine, and he contributed to its pages not infrequent sober papers. He took particular interest in the intellectual exercises of the college societies, and his orderly and persistent habit of mind did much for the prosperity and usefulness of each of them. His social instinct was peculiarly strong,—he was thoroughly "clubbable"—so that of the "Institute," the A Δ Φ, and the Hasty Pudding Club he was a popular and influential member. He was chosen into the Φ B K, in regular order, in junior year.

His own general estimate of college life he summed up at the time in the biographical fragment already alluded to, written on his twenty-first birthday, in his second senior term: "Though not without the ordinary vexations of life, my college course has, as a whole, been very pleasant; and though, of course, its literary advan-

tages have not been improved as they might have been, yet I am conscious of having used them with considerable profit to myself. But although I have not been an unstudious man, by any means, it is my present belief that I shall value the impressions of life and character received here and the acquaintanceships and friendships I have formed, more than all the knowledge or even the habits of study imparted by a course of text-books and recitations which, however apparently unavoidable, are certainly, in most cases, unproductive of either the extensive learning or the thorough mental training which ought to be acquired in college."

Modern methods of study were foreshadowed, in those days, in a great restlessness under the compulsory system and debate as to its modification. Ropes adds to the above: "It will be my aim in the study of the Law, to which I have always intended to devote myself, to see whether the 'voluntary' system be not more conducive to application, with more satisfactory results."

Graduating from college in 1857, Ropes entered the Law School in March, 1858, and continued there till March 8, 1859. After a six months' visit to Europe, with his father, he returned to Boston, and entered the office of Messrs. Peleg W. Chandler and George O. Shattuck, remaining with those eminent lawyers until the autumn of 1860, when he again entered the Law School, and took his degree of LL.B. in July, 1861.

In this year he was awarded the Bowdoin Prize for an essay upon "The Limits of Religious Thought," with special reference to Mansel's volume so entitled.

After graduating he returned to the office of Messrs. Chandler and Shattuck, and in November, 1861, was admitted to the bar. For some time he occupied an of-

fice in common with his classmate Mr. Robert M. Morse, and in 1865 he became formally associated in practice with his friend Mr. John C. Gray. In 1878 Mr. Wm. Caleb Loring joined the firm, of which the style became Ropes, Gray and Loring, and of which Mr. Ropes remained the senior partner until his death.

To his two years in the Law School, Ropes always reverted with peculiar satisfaction as among the most delightful and profitable of his life. His mind was now well matured; the subjects and mode of study were agreeable to him; he had leisure for reflection and reading; and especially—what was always indispensable to his happiness—he was associated with a group of highly congenial friends. Among these were several of his college classmates. Of others with whom he was in daily and nightly contact and held high converse, it will not be invidious to mention particularly Stephen George Perkins, of the class of 1856, who gave his life for his country in 1862 and whose influence on Ropes's own strong mind the latter always felt to have been exceptionally important to him.

Estimates of Mr. Ropes's qualities as a lawyer have been offered to this Society, and more particularly at the meeting of the Bar Association called to commemorate him. Such are not attempted here. His associates at the bar unite in giving him a high place among them for the clearness and gravity of his opinions, his balanced judgment and rigid integrity of thought. In the earlier years of his practice he appeared frequently in court. For a time he was Assistant District Attorney of the United States under Mr. George S. Hillard. From 1866 to 1870, together with Mr. John C. Gray, he edited the American Law Review. In later years the greatly increased

trust business of the firm was chiefly in his hands and engrossed the larger portion of his time.

In general, it may be said of Mr. Ropes, that while he had a profound interest in the law and enjoyed its practice, entering with keen zest into the trial of such cases as he took up, yet his profession never monopolized the activities of his mind. His other intellectual interests kept a full place beside it, or even a superior one. As a lawyer he was hardly ambitious, except for thoroughness of fundamental knowledge and the excellence of his actual work. He left his profession at his office; and, as time went on, while its own claims became more exacting, on the other hand his practical application to other subjects became more engrossing. His professional day was long. His evenings and holidays were more and more exclusively devoted to historical study and the composition of his successive books.

The outbreak of the Civil War began a period which was, for Mr. Ropes, not only, in common with all patriotic men, one of absorbing practical interest, but of peculiar personal experience.

As has been remarked, his reading and thinking had been, even from his boyhood, rather closely specialized, and particularly in the direction of history and military affairs.[1] He was thoroughly versed in our national history, and deeply interested in the constitutional questions which had been long fiercely debated and were in

[1] *The early addiction of his mind to these subjects may possibly be traced to certain particular impressions. He records how deeply he was affected, while still in London and before his fifth year, by "relations of the Chinese war, and the dreadful massacre of the English in Afghanistan." The guns fired in honor of Queen Victoria's marriage, of which it pleased him to recall the echoes, no doubt stimulated his childish imagination.*

1861 submitted to the arbitrament of physical strife. His patriotic ardor was high. He was full of the energy and activity, and possessed the force and steadfastness and also the courage and resolution of the good soldier. In mental and moral respects he was singularly fitted for distinction in a military career. Had it been physically possible for him, he would have joined the great throng of young men like himself who, in the pure spirit of duty, poured forth to the defence of the Union. He would have carried with him a technical interest in military operations with which but few entered upon their campaigns.

But the bodily infirmity which has been alluded to, while it had little influence on his career in civil life, was an insuperable impediment in the way of military service. The disappointment to him, as a patriot and as a student of military science, was doubtless more acute than any one but himself ever knew. To accept the inevitable with composure and cheerfulness was peculiarly characteristic of him.[1] To his most intimate friends he scarcely confided the regret which, had he permitted it, would have so deeply affected him. But as a spectator of events in which he would willingly have been a participant, Mr. Ropes followed the whole course of the

[1] *In the biographical fragment Mr. Ropes thus expresses his feelings when the nature of his spinal trouble was clearly made known to him. "I thought it rather a dismal situation for me, obliged to leave school for an indefinite time, and deformed into the bargain. But although I soon gave up the hope of becoming in time straight again, I took comfort in the consideration that my health — a blessing often denied to persons in my condition — was now fairly good, and I gave up desponding as useless and uncalled for." This was the spirit in which he always met the adverse element in experience. The deformity, as he calls it, was a lateral curvature of the spine, having little effect upon his figure except to lower his stature.*

war with a minute watchfulness which was almost that of a professional observer. Probably no man in the country possessed himself more thoroughly of the details of the operations of both the armies. He observed the unfolding strategy of both with the acumen of the military critic and the anxiety of the patriot. His judgment of our leaders was perspicacious and strict. When a celebrated general, failing in the vigorous offensive expected of him, and having with great but futile exertions transferred his army to an ineffective position, announced by telegraph "The army is safe," "*Safe!*" exclaimed Mr. Ropes; "it would be *safe* on Boston Common!" His solicitude and interest led him to make several journeys to the seat of war, where he spent some time in camp with his friends. Of the Twentieth Massachusetts, to which, with many personal friends, his brother Henry belonged, Mr. Ropes was almost a member, so close were his relations with it. After the war he was chosen an associate member of their permanent organization.[1] With other soldiers and officers of distinction his intimacies became numerous, extending, after the war, to many distinguished Confederates. The justness of his mind, which singularly defended him from prejudice on all subjects, made him capable of appreciating the motives and sentiments of individuals on the disunion side, and of weighing the soldierly merits of their leaders and their conduct of their operations with a candor which won their high respect.

But Mr. Ropes's apprehension of the radical importance of the questions at issue in the Civil War was profound, and he was a vigorous defender of the logic of

[1] *The memorial of Mr. Ropes adopted by the Twentieth Regiment Association is printed on pages 93–94.*

the Union position, as he was ardent in its practical support. "On the adoption of the Constitution, were there thirteen nations or one nation?" was a form into which he was wont to condense the argument.

In 1876 his deep scientific interest in the war as a military event, and the sense of the importance of preserving its historical details with fulness and accuracy, led Mr. Ropes to propose the organization of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, and to the work of this association he gave great attention so long as he lived. He was always its leading spirit, and its delightful meetings were for many seasons held in his house. At them he used the advantage of his wide personal acquaintance to bring together a great number of distinguished officers, whose essays became of the highest value as records of fact and criticisms of military operations. Not a few officers of the former Confederate army accepted the agreeable hospitality of the Society and contributed papers. From the large amount of material accumulated, several volumes have been published. The opening article in the first volume was by Mr. Ropes, on "The Peninsular Campaign of General McClellan in 1862." Other publications of his relating to the Civil War are, "The Army under Pope," in Scribner's series on "The Campaigns of the Civil War"; an article on "The Battle of Gettysburg," in the Atlantic Monthly for December, 1886; in the same magazine for April, 1887, "General McClellan"; in the Harvard Monthly for May, 1887, "A Few Words about Secession"; in June, 1891, in Scribner's Magazine, "The War as we See it Now"; and in August, 1891, in the same periodical, "General Sherman."

It was natural that a writer so competent and well

equipped should be looked to for a history of the great war; and in 1891 or 1892 Mr. Ropes was induced to undertake the task of reviewing its events, chiefly from the standpoint of military criticism. The title[1] of the work on which he thus became engaged, and which occupied him during the remainder of his life, was infelicitous, since it implied, rather, a descriptive and popular narrative. The two volumes, which were all he was permitted to complete, and which cover about one half of the period of the war, are a monument to his ability as a student of military affairs, and to the remarkable impartiality with which his judicial mind was able to treat a variety of questions which have involved much dispute and personal feeling.

The same thoroughness of information, acumen in the examination of evidence, clearness of historical statement and in argument, which give to the fragment of Mr. Ropes's great work its distinction, had already been exhibited in his Napoleonic writings. It was some years before he went to college that his interest in historical subjects was particularly determined to the career of Bonaparte,[2] in regard to which he became one of the leading authorities of the world. His successive writings on the subject were, "Who Lost Waterloo?" in the Atlantic Monthly for June, 1881; in Scribner's Magazine, for June and July, 1887, two articles entitled "Some Illustrations of Napoleon and his Times"; and in the same periodical for March and April, 1888, two on "The Campaign of Waterloo." In 1885 appeared his volume on "The First Napoleon"; and in 1892 his elab-

[1] *"The Story of the Civil War."*

[2] *He ascribed the first awakening of this special interest to the reading of John S. C. Abbott's "Life of Napoleon" when about fifteen years old.*

orate work on "The Campaign of Waterloo," with a valuable atlas.

Mr. Ropes's ardent interest in Napoleon's career has sometimes been referred to as partaking of the character of hero-worship. This inference is exceedingly far from the truth. His admiration for Napoleon was limited very strictly to a profound appreciation of his vast intellectual endowments, and his unparalleled executive ability and power over men. He also did full justice to the career of Napoleon in its liberalizing influence on the political condition of western Europe.

But for the man himself Mr. Ropes had a strong repugnance and he never gave serious attention to his personal history or the questions arising out of it. With the details of Napoleon's life he was, of course, sufficiently acquainted; but he always passed them by with that power of dismissing unuseful matter from his attention for which he was distinguished. He was apt to sum up Napoleon's private character in a sentence which intimated his feeling towards him,—"Napoleon was not a gentleman."

But the great game of war which Napoleon was capable of playing with supreme ability had intense interest for Mr. Ropes, and he followed it in the careers of the great generals of ancient and modern days with minute attention and thorough intelligence. Undoubtedly, in Cæsar's or Napoleon's or Wellington's career it also profoundly stimulated his imagination; yet it was not the stir of its events but the logical processes guiding warfare which engaged Mr. Ropes's interest. For war, as a moral fact, he had a deep philanthropic abhorrence, and as a means of arbitrament between peoples, even a certain contempt. "It is the most clumsy of all instruments, and

no man can tell what it will issue in," he used to say. The responsibility of initiating warfare he viewed with deep moral seriousness, and his condemnation of those leaders of peoples who have wantonly entered upon it could not be exceeded in forcibleness. He never pretended to excuse President Cleveland, whose administration he had heartily upheld in its general course, for his action on the Venezuela question. The horror and wickedness of a war between the United States and England rose before a mind profoundly capable of appreciating what it would have been in colors so lurid that they never faded. "I shall never forgive him, *never*," he repeatedly declared.

He strongly disapproved our entering upon war with Spain in 1898, believing that its objects might and should have been attained by the diplomatic measures in progress when it was hurried on. He regarded it as a politician's movement, and considered the humane justifications pleaded to be unsound and sensational. The appeals made to the patriotic instincts of our *young* men at this time, he strongly depreeated as unfounded and misleading. Still more heartily he condemned the course of our administration in regard to the Philippines; regarding the conquest of those islands as a wanton assault upon the rights of a people whose independence we should have respected and maintained. The "imperialistic" policy of the administration he regarded as in violation of the principles of our Constitution, and dangerously revolutionary. He declined to attend the dinner given in Boston to President McKinley, holding him responsible for leading us into what he deemed a false and perilous course.

It must be admitted that in regard to our political

condition and prospects Mr. Ropes had become seriously discouraged. The persistent and never-lessening corruptions of our politics, the rise of "bosses," the increasing tendency to the centralization of power, the usurpations of recent administrations, inspired in him grave solicitude as to the permanency of our democratic experiment, and even as to the general practicability of republican institutions under existing moral and social conditions. He entertained the doubt whether such institutions, in presence of the temptations offered to fraud in their conduct, did not exact, normally, from the honest private citizen a greater sacrifice of time and pains than the average man could afford to make.

The other, and by far the deeper, of the subjects which engaged the lifelong interest of Mr. Ropes's mind, was theology. Fostered by the influences of home, and particularly by his mother's absorption in them, religious questions early engaged his attention on their intellectual side, and still more deeply on the spiritual. His religious instincts, while sober and practical, were strong and fervent. He was naturally devotional, and kept up the simple practices of childhood and youth, in this respect, with sincerity and deep feeling, to his latest years. He was, at all periods of his life, a constant student of theology, and his mind was habitually conversant with its themes. He long meditated a series of essays upon some of these, which, had he lived to complete his work upon the Civil War, he would probably have composed and published. Reared under orthodox doctrinal conceptions, these were the starting-point of his thought, and he was thoroughly versed in their logical justifications. But the spirit of his home and its training had been liberal, as we have said, and from the outset the posture of

his mind was one of strict independence. His thought steadily, though slowly, developed and progressed. All the elements of the doctrinal system in which he was reared underwent the rigid scrutiny of his own reflections, and, if retained, became personal convictions. His creed, as time went on, became greatly simplified, relieved of abstractions and doctrinal subtleties. Its emphatic note was a singularly childlike repose in the goodness and providence of God, in whom he rested as a loving Father, in whose benevolence and care he unreservedly confided. The great advantages and privileges he had personally enjoyed were habitually seen as so many indications of divine paternal love and watchfulness, and equally of the obligation imposed on him of just return, in the tenor of his life and conduct, for the peculiar blessings bestowed upon him. The sense of God's providence was an incessant practical motive in all that he did, and a perfect support in all that he endured of trial and affliction.

On one of his European journeys he was stricken down, quite alone and in a remote city, where at the time conveniences for the welfare of the sick foreigner were most inadequately provided. When he realized his condition, he was at first deeply dismayed. Then, very soon, the thought of the unfailing goodness of God, his bountiful Heavenly Father, came to him; he recalled his home, his parents, the singular privileges and blessings of his lot, and, as he afterward said, his mind became and remained entirely at rest as to the situation he was in, and unanxious as to its issues.

The same practical religiousness pervaded all his active life, and was deeply involved in that benevolence which was his most characteristic trait and constant habit. No man ever more fully accepted and prosecuted life as a

stewardship. His vigorous judgment was not often obscured, but it was incessantly tempered by indulgent pity for misfortune and sympathy with the manhood which underlay the least worthy characters. His heart grew constantly more tender, and with increasing means his beneficence became more and more extensive and varied. Remaining unmarried, he was on principle opposed to the accumulation of wealth, and he scattered his income almost with lavishness. He was not much attracted to public objects, although he gave generously to those brought to his attention. His sympathies went out more spontaneously to private want and difficulty, and especially he loved to help those who were helping themselves, —above all, to assist the fortunes of promising young men. He gave the time which was so valuable to him, his advice and personal care and pains, as unstintedly as his wealth. His patience with the perverse and tiresome, his tenderness even towards grievous offenders, were extreme. His sympathy with the most humble persons was singularly quick and natural, and free from condescension. He appreciated his own station in life and valued the advantages of the class to which he belonged. He was not careless of his rights or of the obligations of others to him, but exacted somewhat strictly whatever it was the duty of any one to render him. But where relations were personal, he easily ignored the distinctions of fortune and culture and saw in every man a man. He met persons of all classes—strangers, officials, his country neighbors, tradesmen, workmen, his own employees and domestics—with an ease and frankness very distinct from careless familiarity, which were born of his respect for the quality of manhood, and which encouraged confidence and won affection, but invited nothing but re-

speet for himself. He put every one at his ease, yet in the most intimate relations maintained a eertain reserve.

This native dignity peculiarly influenced *the young*, and made their intercourse with him highly improving. His affection for them was almost intense; they had for him a veritable magnetism. Their companionship refreshed him; he understood their feelings and the workings of their minds, and met them upon their own levels of thought. He treated them, on the one hand, almost as equals; yet instinctively he imposed on them a respeet which they were never tempted to violate. In a mixed company it was hard for him to confine himself to their elders. He was never so happy as when he gathered children about him at his seaside home, or had a group of young men at his table, or in his study, in town. Both of his houses were well supplied for them with games, toys, musical instruments, and other means of entertainment. He loved the gayeties of the young, joined in their fun, and interested himself in their serious pursuits. In eonversation he listened to their opinions with a deferenee which was perfectly sincere, which made them value their own mental processes, encouraged genuine thinking, and brought out manliness and womanliness in them. He expressed his own judgments as between man and man with unconscious freedom, and so naturally as not to overbear or smother theirs. He watched narrowly the unfolding eharaeters of those with whom he was particularly intimate, losing no opportunity for the suggestions of moral principle or praetical wisdom.

This gift of *camaraderie* seeured to Mr. Ropes an almost limitless aequaintanee among the young. He remembered all their names and the partieular associations and interests of each. In public plaees children flocked

about him with artless confidence. They appeared freely upon his summer grounds and broad verandahs, sure of a welcome and appropriate hospitality. Young men loved to pass their vacations with him, equal comrades in his out-of-door pleasures, and spending endless evenings in good talk. His city home was the headquarters of not a few chosen ones, who came and went as if it were their own. They made him their confidant, carrying to him their life-questions, their ambitions, and even their follies and errors. How many he assisted with wise advice, with considerate suggestion, with frank and even stern reproof which they accepted for its manifest spirit of affectionate interest in their welfare, with practical furtherance in making their way in life, with loans or gifts of money, will never be known.

In this capacity to understand and reach the young, Mr. Ropes was almost unique, and it furnished him consciously the outgo for his strong domestic affections which his bachelorhood denied him.

Similar traits gave to Mr. Ropes's society a peculiar attraction for intelligent women. They remarked that he never "talked down" to them, but always as to equal minds, whose thought he was ready to value, not hesitating to pay it the respect of frankly controverting it when he differed. A wise judgment or suggestive idea was to him the most valuable thing in life, for which he waited, seeming always to expect it from his interlocutor, whoever he was.

In the company of men, the clearness and thoroughness of his own thought, his perfect candor, and his confidence in others, with a certain briskness of manner and some fondness for the vernacular, gave to Mr. Ropes's conversation a tone of positiveness which may have ap-

peared at times as dogmatic. It was not so in spirit. His one object in discussion was the determination of the truth. He loved to clarify questions. It troubled him to see another groping for truth, or laboring in what seemed to him error, when light was to be had. He would work hard to convince, but he never sought to overbear another's mind. Good talk was his greatest enjoyment. He was at his best with a single congenial friend in the late hours of the evening. At such times the gravity, penetration, elevation, and impressiveness of his conversation upon important themes raised it to the highest levels. He did not possess wit or humor in himself, although peculiarly appreciative of those qualities in others; nor had he largely the gift of intuition except as experience and sympathy gave him marked insight into character. His forte was in clearness of reasoning, impelled by the warmest moral earnestness. His thought was eminently practical. He disliked mere theories and fine-spun argument. His views were large and sound. But he was in the best sense an idealist, from his absolute confidence in truth and his constant effort, in secret and public, to attain it. And what he attained he with unsurpassed fidelity made the law of his thought and conduct. To fundamental moral principles he was rigorously loyal. His religious ideas were the inspiration and practical incentive of his daily life.

Mr. Ropes was highly social in disposition, readily became a friend, and few private men were more widely known in his own city and throughout the country. In his earlier years he appeared much in general society, but large companies became distasteful to him from their aimlessness and superficiality. Similarly, he never greatly enjoyed the ordinary life of clubs, although he belonged

to a number, as the Union, of which he was long an officer, the St. Botolph and the Puritan, in Boston; the University and the Harvard, of New York; and the University, of Philadelphia. His membership in the ancient Wednesday Club he valued highly, and he very constantly attended its conversational reunions. A fellow-member writes: "Our meetings will never be the same to me, now that Ropes is gone. I feel as if the Club had lost its inspiring genius."

It is true that, entirely modest and singularly unconscious of self, the masculine force that was in him, his clear intelligence, and perfect frankness in the expression of his opinions, gave him something of leadership in most societies.

But Mr. Ropes always liked best the intercourse of the dinner-table, for its mingled good cheer and opportunity of pleasant conversation. A remarkable sodality owes its origin to his instinct in this respect. Early in the winter after graduation, he proposed to a number of his classmates that the exceptionally happy associations of their college life should be maintained by a monthly dinner together. They met for the first time, on his invitation, about the generous table of his father's house, where he was still living. The informal organization which thus arose became the "Jacobite Club," as it was presently called in jocose allusion to his own Christian name. Its delightful meetings, full of wit and humor, of frank discussion, good-fellowship and ever-growing mutual affection, have never been intermitted during more than forty years. They were to Ropes, as they have been to all its members, the choicest of social occasions, which no one, least of all its "Founder," ever willingly missed.

What such associations may mean to a serious man, Ropes himself testified. He once said, "I had rather have the confidence and respect of the Jacobite Club than any reward the rest of the world could give me."

Of his own agreeable dining-room the hospitalities were incessant. The material feast was simple though elegant; the spirit of the occasion was always unconstrained and cheerful. He gathered about his table the widest variety of guests. Persons eminent in many walks continually sat there. One form of thoughtfulness was habitual with him. When he expected guests of distinction and accomplishments, he was apt to invite among them promising young men, to be stimulated and instructed by such society. On Sunday evenings, as was well known to his young friends, his less formal dinner was always open to any who should come in, self-invited, and a group of such were usually there. They were frequently there, also, by casual invitation, on other evenings, and the freshness of young life, their lively talk and animated discussions, their songs, in which he loved to join, their affection and confidence in him, made his house a home for himself and for them. They were aware of the hour at which he wished to retire to his study, and departed contented and happy. He knew how to be father and brother to them. Many collegians and other youths from a distance came to him, recommended by parents or friends, and for these he always accepted a serious responsibility and gave them his watchful care. His last guest, on the evening of his lamented seizure, was a young student, recently introduced to him, who dined with Mr. Ropes alone.

For a few years after his entrance upon professional life, Mr. Ropes remained a member of his father's family

in their ample home at 92 Beacon Street. On his father's death, in 1869, he removed with his mother and sister to 99 Mount Vernon Street, where he lived until October, 1873. After the death of his mother in that year, he made a prolonged visit to Europe, in company with his sister and other friends, on return from which he established himself in bachelor-quarters at 53 Temple Street. In October, 1883, he again occupied his house in Mount Vernon Street, and it continued his city home until his death.

In the same year, 1883, he bought land at York Harbor, Maine, and built a house, which he called the "Villa Tranquille," a name which he had remarked on a house in Mentone, and mentally appropriated.[1] Here, except when he went abroad for his vacation, he spent all his remaining summers, and the "Villa" became a centre of easy hospitality. He kept it full, chiefly of young guests, but older friends and many persons of distinction were entertained. His delightful afternoon dinners brought together cottage neighbors, friends from adjacent towns, litterateurs, officers of the army and navy, mingled old

[1] *The inscription which he placed over the door of the Villa Tranquille, from the beginning of the VIth Satire of Horace (Book II.), was highly characteristic:—*

> *"Hoc erat in votis; modus agri non ita magnus*
> *Hortus ubi et tecto vicinus jugis aquæ fons,*
> *Et paullum silvæ super his foret. Auctius atque*
> *Di melius fecere. Bene est. Nil amplius oro,*
> *Maia nate, nisi ut propria hæc mihi munera faxis."*

An occurrence in connection with this inscription greatly amused Mr. Ropes. An old and somewhat seedy wayfarer having been invited upon the verandah during a shower, recognized the verses at once, and with hearty appreciation exclaimed, "Ah! so old Flaccus *has been here with his jack-knife, has he?" Mr. Ropes used to say that this incident made it worth while to have built the house.*

and young. For the boys and girls he gave large evening parties, with music and dancing, to which swarmed the whole youthful population, in response to his informal invitations, given personally as he moved among them in his morning strolls upon the beach. The evening of the Fourth of July was the occasion of an annual fête, with fireworks and balloons, never omitted until 1898, after which he would not seem by such a celebration to be approving the course of our Administration in the Spanish and Philippine wars. His own particular diversion was croquet, to which he gave many happy hours. Besides this, his only exercise was walking, of which at all seasons he was very fond, and which in early years he extended to distances of many miles. His vacations were short—of six weeks only—but that time he gave wholly to recreation. He would have no avoidable associations with work about the "V. T.," as it was familiarly called, and interdicted any but the most pressing communications from his office. He returned to town before the close of August, finding the late weeks of summer a favorable time for progress upon the successive volumes in the preparation of which he became engaged.

In the prosecution of his literary work Mr. Ropes's habits were, as in other matters, laborious, but free from nervous intensity. His library of special authorities was large, but he collected little material in the form of memoranda. His knowledge of his subjects was so thorough, even lesser details were carried so clearly in his photographic memory, the subjects he dealt with had been so long considered, that he used singularly little of the apparatus of the writer, besides his pen. His care to ensure final accuracy by reference to authorities was, however, unwearied and minute. His visits to Europe had

given him opportunity to explore important localities connected with the career of Napoleon, and he had, in like manner, traversed and inspected many of those associated with the Civil War. He wrote slowly, with unsparing revision, having successive portions of his work returned to him in type-written copies, for the greater freedom of criticism. Of the first volume of his history of the Civil War he even had a small edition privately printed, in advance, to be subjected to the criticism of a number of his friends. To his labor on his books, he added that of a large correspondence elicited by them, to which he gave prompt and conscientious attention. Much of this was with former officers of the Southern Confederacy. He was in communication, also, with numerous military authorities abroad, and became the recipient of agreeable personal attentions from them during his European visits.

Of these, Mr. Ropes made many. Besides the longer ones of his earlier years, it became his custom frequently to spend his summers in England and on the Continent. Strongly addicted to habit in his personal life, and enjoying home comfort, he equally loved variety, and adapted himself to the incidents of journeying with a good humor which made him the best of travelling-companions. For the sea and its associations he had an inherited love. His literary culture and wide historical information, his delight in nature and generous appreciation of the arts, with a vein of youthful romance which never failed him, kept him susceptible to the interest of every situation.

On one of his European journeys he amused his leisure by collecting and collating all attainable portraits of Julius Cæsar, an account of which he later published in one of the magazines.

Although he attained honorable distinction in literature and as an authority in the military art, the life of Mr. Ropes remained characteristically that of a private man; and its comprehensive suggestion is of the widely reaching effect which such a life may exert. Ready to accept responsibility at the call of duty, he was by temperament averse from public functions. He loved the independence of the private station, and appreciated and preferred personal intercourse as the effective channel of his influence upon his time. He discharged for many years the office of a Vestryman of Trinity Church, and he was for one or two terms an Overseer of Harvard University. But while at all times profoundly interested in public affairs, thinking and conversing upon them with characteristic energy and clearness, and possessing, indeed, in his practical judgment, his knowledge of men, and his power of effective speaking, some of the best qualifications for public life, he entered the field of active politics only during the campaign of 1876, when he accepted the position of President of the Bristow Club, and made speeches in various parts of the State.

Mr. Ropes's personal tastes and habits were most simple. His wants were few. He loved to be bountiful, and needed comfort, but he had no disposition to luxury. His private meals were almost frugal. He slept long and soundly and arose late. But he habitually extended the evening hours, which he best loved, to midnight, or willingly, if he had good company, far beyond it. He reserved an hour or more, before retiring, for personal reading. This was often only recreative, but usually it was serious and devotional. Throughout life, he was a diligent student of the New Testament and its literature, and with this he seems usually to have ended his day. His favorite

edition of the Testament contained both the Greek and the English texts, and the two were habitually compared. Well-worn books of devotion always lay beside the volume. For the character and thought of Jesus, Mr. Ropes entertained a profound and sympathetic reverence, and he came more and more to deplore that their simplicity had been so deeply complicated by the subtleties of theology. In the Epistles of St. Paul he always found great suggestiveness, and he was thoroughly versed in the great Apostle's ideas and arguments. The theological system, however, in which his youth had been trained, and which was so largely founded upon apostolic thought, lost most of its hold upon his mind, as it matured.

Mr. Ropes continued in the exercise of his profession to the end. For the prosecution of his literary work, he latterly reserved to himself one or two days of the week, and he also gave up much of his forensic practice, as the property trusts of his firm, of which he was especially in charge, exacted more of his time. He reached his office at nearly mid-forenoon, but remained there till late afternoon, reserving only time for his walk before dinner. His evenings, which in former years were largely given to society, were latterly devoted chiefly to the composition of his books. But his intimate friends knew that when the night had far enough waned, they were sure of his welcome, and of the inspiration of his cheerful, wise, and well-ordered talk.

So passed among us a thoroughly genuine, earnest, serviceable, well-balanced, religious, manly life; a life founded in conscious loyalty to God, permeated by the sense of duty, and directed and warmed by love for men. Its many personal advantages were used, with singular fidelity, as talents lent. Its disadvantages were compen-

sated by a willing and philosophical acceptance of them, and the resolute appropriation of every source of strength and usefulness. It was recognized as a high moral privilege; devoted steadily to self-improvement; unweariedly consecrated to the service of fellow-men.

John Codman Ropes was a highly characteristic example of the best possible issues of the ideas and principles which have underlain and shaped the civilization of New England. Robust in conscientiousness, tolerant but firm in conviction, self-reliant, virile, idealistic but practical, he was gentle, affectionate, charitable, domestic, public-spirited,—a truly righteous man. His temper was serene and equable, free from self-indulgence, cheerful in the enjoyment of life's pleasant things, but singularly pure, unexacting, tender, and kind. As a citizen his patriotism was ardent but discriminating; he would have his country magnanimous, her institutions just, their administration pure. He loved the Church and its rites, and was diligent in his attendance on its ministrations, but was independent and even critical in thought, and incapable of the sectarian spirit. Knowing the world well, he detested its evil, but a wide experience made him indulgent in his judgment of individuals. For friendship, he had a very genius. He adapted himself by instinct to persons of every class, responding quickly to their sympathies, respectful of their views, prompt to serve their interests. The humble loved him. He had the universal respect of his equals in culture and associations. Through his own candor and trustfulness he was a frank censor of conduct; but his keen insight, his balanced judgment, his power of sympathy but rigorous uprightness, made him an unequalled adviser of the young, of men in any kind of trouble, of the erring who regretted their ways.

He looked for good in all men. Only of insincerity, impurity, meanness, pretence, cruelty, and hardness of heart was he intolerant. Even for the animal world he had a singular tenderness.

Mr. Ropes's remarkable vigor of mind and body was continued to him, unabated, to the last. The closing day of his conscious life was characteristic and happy. He went to his office, as usual, but found it, from some repairs, in disorder, so that he could not occupy it. He had always loved a holiday, but affected disappointment at being debarred from his desk. He jested with his office-staff on their disposition to exclude him. "Well, I see that you prefer my room to my company," he said, and bade them what was his last kindly farewell. Returning to his home, he sent for his secretary, and passed the day in work upon his history of the Civil War. About five in the afternoon he ceased dictation, saying, "We have had a happy day, have we not? If we could have a year of such days as this, we should have our work done."

After his customary hour of outdoor exercise, he dined, as has been stated, with a single guest, a young student lately introduced to his acquaintance. He finished the evening, as usual, in his study, but retired early. He was ready for bed when the final summons came, in some symptom which caused him to call for aid. He was able to indicate that he was seriously ill, and to lie down without help. But when, in half an hour, his physician arrived, he could no longer articulate. Physical life continued four days longer, but for him this world was no more. He breathed his last on October 28, 1899, his age being sixty-three years and six months.

It was the beautiful, painless close of a well-spent life. With health and faculties wholly unimpaired, in the

midst of full prosperity, beloved and honored of all men, he laid down the burden and the joys of earthly being.

From the community in which he was so valuable, from the wide circle of his friends, he seemed to be taken too soon. But those who knew him best and loved him most will not begrudge him his euthanasy.

ADDRESSES DELIVERED BEFORE
THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
IN
COMMEMORATION OF JOHN CODMAN ROPES
NOVEMBER 9, 1899

ADDRESS

BY CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

OUR associate John Codman Ropes died at his house in Boston shortly after the midnight of Friday, the 27th–28th of last month. His brief illness dated from the previous Monday only. I make this announcement with a deep sense of personal loss, —the sense of a loss which can never be made good. I shall call upon others to pay tribute to him,—I cannot say others who have known him longer or even better than myself, or who prized his friendship more highly; for I have known him since college days, close upon half a century ago, and known him well, and there were few indeed whose friendship I prized more highly. But I was not so fortunate as to be a member of the class of 1857, or his professional brother. Our associate Solomon Lincoln was his classmate and familiar college friend; and another of our associates and he lived long together in the daily contact of partners. It is fitting that these two should now put on lasting record in our Proceedings their estimate of the man and of his work. I shall therefore confine myself to the announcement of his death, claiming only the friend's privilege of a few passing words.

Mr. Ropes had been a member of our Society for more than nineteen years, having been elected at the June meeting of 1880, while Mr. Winthrop was still its President. Our friend Dr. Green, now our Dean, then stood thirty-second on the roll; and, in the years which have since intervened, Mr. Ropes rose almost exactly to the position which Dr. Green held when Mr. Ropes was

elected. At the time of his death the latter stood thirty-first in the order of our seniority. Though deeply interested and very eminent in his particular branch of historical research, Mr. Ropes, greatly to our loss, never made himself essentially part and parcel of this Society, or participated with any regularity in its proceedings or its work. The reason was not far to seek. He was absorbed in another Society, not dissimilar in character, the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, which he originated. Of it he was the soul, and in his judgment that Society had greater claims upon him. Our loss was its gain; but none the less for us a loss much to be deplored. Had it so chanced that Mr. Ropes had identified himself exclusively with our organization and our field of work,—associating himself with us and it,—he would have proved one of the most valuable and fruitful additions ever made to our number; for, a hard worker, he also was essentially what Dr. Johnson called "a clubbable man," and, being such, he would have communicated to us a distinct impetus long perceptible. As it was, we saw him only occasionally at our meetings, and heard from him far less frequently than we wished. He was here on the 13th of last April, when he did me the compliment to come that he might listen to the address I was that day to deliver; and it is now matter of no little satisfaction to me that it then came in my way to make an allusion to him and his reputation as a military critic, which the audience appreciated in hearty fashion, giving him a pleasure he did not hesitate to show. Otherwise, through his nineteen years of membership, we have seen him chiefly when tribute was to be rendered to some one of our Society who had done service in the Rebellion, or when a military theme was un-

derstood to be likely to come under discussion. He thus paid tributes to Generals Palfrey, Devens, and Walker; of the first two of whom, also, he prepared memoirs, published in our Proceedings. In 1887 he also furnished a memoir of the late John C. Gray. He served twice on the Committee annually appointed to nominate officers; and, at the time of his death, was a member of the Committee on Historical Manuscripts.

It only remains for me to say a few words of a friend. John Ropes — for in this connection I cannot call him Mr. Ropes, or refer to him formally as "our associate" — was as genuine, as individual a man as it has been my good fortune to meet in life, — in character supremely attractive. He was a man not easy to portray. There was about him something unexpected. He was *sui generis*, in mind as in body. The most manly of men, he was also at times childlike in his frank, outspoken simplicity. In him the social side was strongly developed. He loved to talk; he delighted in the club and the dinner-table; he was hospitable to a degree; he was kind and sympathetic and thoughtful of others. Delightfully illogical, a keen critic in his way, despising cant and pretence, — outspoken, courageous, straightforward, — he was also religious, though in a characteristic way. In no degree what is best described as fervid or pious, he had been an interested student of theology, and loved to discuss its problems. Very tolerant of difference, he himself felt the need of fixedness in faith; and yet he early craved something wider and richer in expression and sympathy than the creeds native to New England in which he had been nurtured. He accordingly identified himself with that broader Episcopacy to which he afterwards devoutly and conscientiously adhered. His was no inanimate or ab-

stract religion. Living in an atmosphere of agnosticism, he was no agnostic. Quite otherwise, indeed. But I do not know that his character in these respects, which all who knew him well felt, was ever more clearly and, I may add, touchingly revealed to me,—by a flash as it were, —than through an anecdote which came to me from a female friend of his and mine. It seems that John Ropes was one day to dine with her. A few hours before the appointed time he called, in some agitation, to tell her that he could not come. His mother, very old, had some time been failing; and the end was now evidently close at hand. Shortly before they had suddenly lost a son and favorite brother, Frank, of about the age of John. So now John came to call upon the lady I have referred to, to explain his absence; and with deep emotion he told her that his mother knew she had not long to live, and he could not leave her even for a moment; for it was her hope and his that she would retain her faculties to the very end, so that, dying, she might carry fresh word from him to Frank. It was characteristic in its outspoken simplicity, its lovableness, its unhesitating expression of childlike faith.

Friendly himself, no one had more friends than he. This was touchingly evident at his funeral. Here was a man who had known neither wife nor child; past sixty years; a student, living alone. He dies, and the whole community crowds to Trinity to bear witness to him. Nor did the expression come from any one quarter or from a single class. It was as widespread as it was genuine; and those there had come, not to pay conventional respect, but because they felt that they wanted to be there. The individuality of the man had been pervasive.

Physically never able to bear arms himself, John

Ropes had an almost inordinate admiration for those who had accomplished great feats of arms. His hero-worship of Napoleon, for instance, scarcely knew bounds, whether of fact or logic or morals. With him it was a cult. His enthusiasm, however, never annoyed, or excited a spirit of controversy. It was accepted, and dismissed, as his. This worship of Napoleon, it is almost needless to say, was shared by me only under very distinct limitations; that, however, between us made no sort of difference, and one of the days of my life I remember most vividly and account most fortunate was a day at the close of June, five years ago, passed in his company on the field of Waterloo. His book on Waterloo had appeared only the year before, and he and I had frequently discussed the plan and incidents of that campaign, though I had never been upon the field. He had been there often; and it was now an all-day pleasure to see the genuine, overflowing delight with which he took an interested novice over the famous battle-ground. He was familiar with its every feature, and seemed to linger almost lovingly about the spot from which the Emperor is alleged to have watched the advance and overthrow of his guard. For me, at least, the occasion was one not to be forgotten.

In his peculiar province of military history John Ropes's study was inexhaustible and his grasp surprising. He seemed equally ready on the minutest detail or the largest operation. The hour and direction of every movement were ready at his tongue. I remember a very characteristic incident illustrative of this. He was deeply interested on the part of General "Baldy" Smith in one of those paper controversies, almost as innumerable as they were interminable, which grew out of the opera-

tions of the Civil War. That particular debate had to do with the momentous failure of General Smith to occupy Petersburg on the evening of June 15, 1864, after the works protecting that place had been successfully carried. At Ropes's table one evening, a year or two ago, the subject came up for discussion in a numerous company, and some question arose as to certain matters of detail. It so chanced that, though he was unaware of the fact, I had then been on the ground; and I casually stated my recollection of what took place. I spoke from memory of things which happened thirty-four years before, and I have little doubt that I was altogether wrong. In any case, my recollection militated strongly against the result of his study of the facts, and he sharply questioned me. My answers were apparently not satisfactory; as he bluntly declared in reply, "I don't believe you were there at all!" Ordinarily such a challenge of accuracy, not to say veracity even, would tend at least to bring conversation to a close, and, speaking strictly within bounds, to generate a sense of injury. With me, in the case of John Ropes, it did nothing of the kind. I was amused, as well as staggered in my faith in my own memory. It never even occurred to me that he could mean to offend; it was his way: and, moreover, I felt he was probably right. The chances of his being so were in any event so great that I had no inclination to set up my recollection of thirty-four years' standing against his thorough study of the case. So I contented myself with having in my repertory one more characteristic anecdote of my lifelong friend.

Almost every man carries lodged in his memory certain familiar lines or catches which recur instinctively when he hears of the loss of friends. These vary with the

periods of life. In my own case I find myself in later years repeating more and more Hamlet's fatalistic words, not less sad than philosophic: "If it be now, 't is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be." Our associate left "betimes." It is not easy to cast the balance and say whether for him it was well or ill. He had enjoyed life, and been the fruitful cause of its enjoyment by others; his life, also, had been a full one, — useful, much occupied, not unduly short. He had in his peculiar field won distinction, and an acknowledged authority. I greatly question whether he had ever tasted what, for him, were the pleasures of life more keenly and pleasantly than at what proved its closing period. He had come, in the quick passage of the years, to a point for him fraught with peculiar danger. The grand climacteric was passed; and though he still retained the full measure of his physical and mental health, he had no family of his own. The best was unquestionably behind. For him the future could not have been better than the past; it might well have been in strong contrast with it. That he would have borne declining strength and shattered powers cheerfully and manfully, no one who knows him can for a moment doubt; but he would have felt deeply, if silently, the loss of his accustomed pleasures; nor could he have lived an idle valetudinarian.

As it was, deeply interested in his great work, he had passed the last summer in his dearly loved vacation home at York, and in the autumn returned to his familiar Boston haunts, feeling in peculiarly good case and hopeful. His book was half done; he saw his way deep into the remaining half. All went well; there was no premoni-

tion. Contrary to his custom, on the for him fateful day, he left his office earlier than usual, some work of repair or innovation being in progress, giving himself a partial holiday, which with him meant some additional hours of enjoyment amid the familiar surroundings of his working room at home, intent upon his theme. The office did not see him again. That afternoon he labored over some campaign problem. He then dined in his wonted way, and, about nine o'clock, again resorted to his library. He was not again seen before his illness. Apparently he had there ended the day earlier than was his custom, for everything was found in the order usual with him. It is very probable that he felt some indication of what was impending,—became conscious that all was not well with him, felt that something was going wrong. So, presently, leaving his bed and calling an old servant, he told her to ring up a physician, who in ten minutes was with him. Already his mind had ceased to work clearly; and, in a few minutes more, he was unconscious. Nature never rallied. The end for him had come. As Hamlet said,—"Let be."

In the preface to his "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," Hallam, after lamenting over the impossibility of exhausting his inexhaustible theme, and recording his sense of the imperfection of his work, adds solemnly: "But I have other warnings to bind up my sheaves while I may,—my own advancing years, and the gathering in the heavens." Our friend and associate left his sheaves but partially gathered,—in his case, a distinct loss to history, for he was engaged in dealing with a most interesting period, and, by nature, acquisition and training, he was peculiarly qualified to deal with it instructively. A richly freighted vessel, with its

large and carefully assorted cargo, slowly accumulated, has gone suddenly down. The loss is public. For us, the fast-narrowing circle of those who were together at Harvard before the great cataclysm, the passing of John Ropes is an event not less suggestive than irremediable. For him, he has merely gone betimes. "'T is not to come."

ADDRESS

BY SOLOMON LINCOLN

THERE was perhaps no citizen of Boston whose death could leave a sense of loss more widely spread than that of Mr. Ropes. He touched the activities and interests of life in this community at many points, and the large and distinguished attendance at his funeral testifies both to the personal regard in which he was held and to the large part he took in important affairs. He leaves a vacant place everywhere. Occupying a private station, at his death he has received almost public honors.

Those of us who knew him in college readily bear witness to the early exhibition of those qualities of mind and character which have marked his whole career. His mature manhood was the simple and direct development of his early traits. While maintaining a high rank in scholarship, he was distinguished then, as always, for the solidity rather than the brilliancy of his attainments, for a retentive and trustworthy memory, for an extensive and accurate familiarity with historical literature, for independent thought, for self-reliance, for the sobriety and soundness of his judgments, and for a thorough knowledge of whatever he studied, by which he acquired clear thought and a capacity for terse and forcible expression.

Possessing these qualities and capacities, they were manifested in all his studies and labors, and in all brought legitimate success.

He chose the profession of the law, but in practice he naturally inclined to the work of the office rather than that of the courts, although he did not neglect nor avoid

the latter. He made little attempt at forensic display, but sought to convince by plain statement and fair argument, and his blows were driven home by the potent force of his high character. Naturally, too, he cultivated the literature of the profession. He and his partner, our associate Mr. Gray, were the first editors of the American Law Review, and they laid its foundations so firmly that it still endures. His tastes and his physical infirmity tended to confirm him in an office practice, and he gradually fell into a large and increasing management of great trusts, gladly confided to his good judgment and his integrity.

But though faithful to his profession, it by no means absorbed his energies. He was far too generous-minded not to take a keen interest in all great questions which temporarily or permanently occupy men's minds. For instance, ecclesiastical history and theological discussion always attracted him. He was not accustomed to form his religious opinions on trust or by inheritance. He thought for himself. He early investigated the systems of Protestant theology, and after some doubt finally attached himself to the Episcopal church. Having thus given his allegiance to this church, he gave it active support, both as a parish officer and by faithful attendance upon its services. He held most intimate relations with its ministers; and many clergymen, not merely of his own church, but of other denominations, were his closest friends. They recognized in him a man of deeply reverential and religious character, and one whose religious life was supplemented by many quiet benefactions.

His habit of wide reading always remained, although necessarily limited by the occupations of a busy life. He gave himself chiefly to history. Our Society early recog-

nized his acquisitions and his distinction in this field. He was chosen a member on June 10, 1880; and if he was less interested than some members in the special objects of the Society, it was because he devoted himself to more distant although kindred fields of investigation.

From college days through life he was especially interested in the first Napoleon, and he studied his career with incessant and minute care. He verified his knowledge by visits to the great battlefields, and collected an interesting and curious mass of material and memorabilia relating to his hero. He published much upon this subject, and his works became authorities, the most important being the "Campaign of Waterloo," published in 1892. This is a copious and learned account of that great struggle, and however we may agree or disagree with the author in his conclusions, there can be but one opinion of the remarkable knowledge, research, and critical skill which these books display. Among Mr. Ropes's friends it is not extravagant to say that he has indissolubly associated his name with that of Napoleon.

Always liberal and wholesome in his political opinions, he took the most patriotic interest in our Civil War. Himself debarred by physical infirmity from active service, his heart was in it. He was in close correspondence with many relatives and friends who were engaged in the great conflict, and the loss of his youngest brother, who was killed at Gettysburg, seemed only to deepen his interest and his devotion.

It is singular that this quiet gentleman of peaceful tastes, both inherited and cultivated, should yet be perhaps best publicly known as the historian of war.

He followed the movements of our armies with a knowledge and intelligent criticism which were marvel-

lous in a civilian, and this knowledge ripened through long years of acquisition until at last it displayed its full fruition in the two volumes of the "Story of the Civil War" which he lived to publish. The Story must remain unfinished, but the author lived to enjoy the wide fame it commanded, not limited to our country, but generously granted in foreign lands. This quiet and unostentatious civilian, who never shouldered a gun, was an authority with whom generals of both armies debated, and to whose opinion they deferred.

Nor did he confine himself to the larger matters to which I have adverted, but to all good causes he lent the assistance due from a public-spirited citizen. His College was always dear to him, and he served long and faithfully on its Board of Overseers.

The qualities with which all who knew him were familiar were displayed in his literary style. This was not ornate, but terse, emphatic, and clear. There was no doubt of the writer's meaning, nor sign of hesitation in expressing it.

Thus this modest citizen, a type of an earlier fashion, has passed his dignified life always in a private position, yet securing a respect and an influence to which no official station could have added.

And yet those who have known him for a lifetime would feel that little had been said if these professional and literary achievements were alone mentioned. It was the engaging personal qualities of the man which endeared him to his friends, and which never lost their charm. His college classmates knew him, as they and all his associates have always known him, to be the hearty, unselfish, cheery friend, generous in his appreciation of others, interested in their ambitions and their

sorrows, and lavish of commendation. His popularity was universal. The many who were privileged to visit his home will long remember his boundless and sunny hospitality. The charm of his qualities was perhaps there best displayed. His guests left him conscious not merely of a gracious welcome, but of a certain clear mental and moral gain, the fruit of sound opinion and healthful discussion. Yet he was no ascetic. No one enjoyed more than he the lighter pleasures of social intercourse, and in them his keen and thoroughly appreciative sense of humor prompted him to play his full part.

The burden of physical infirmity which he always bore produced no bitterness. He had no animosities; if argumentative, he was not controversial. And to the last he exhibited the vivacity of youth, maintained and stimulated largely by his constant association with young men, whose patron he was, and among whom his sincerest mourners will be found.

Immediately after his graduation he organized a small club of classmates who have dined together monthly during the cooler months of more than forty years. Here he, the founder, exercised a benignant sway, and it may well be understood that this broken circle can hardly be restored.

ADDRESS

BY JOHN C. GRAY

I DO not propose to speak of Mr. Ropes's historical labors in detail. Many of this company are far more competent to judge them than I am. Their main qualities are well marked: Great industry in the collection of authorities. He was not a rapid reader, but he never had to read anything twice. His memory, to the minutest circumstances of date and place, was remarkable. Then he had unusual power of mastering the details of a complicated transaction and of setting forth the result in a lucid, orderly, and attractive manner, so as to be alike instructive to specialists and intelligible to the ordinary reader. And, finally, he had an intense desire to find out and tell the truth. He welcomed the expression of adverse views, not that he might confute them, but that he might seriously, without pride of opinion, consider what there was in them of truth.

Mr. Ropes was by profession a lawyer. I have been associated with him for nearly forty years in the study and practice of the law. As an advocate he excelled in the quality which I have mentioned as marking his historical work,—a great facility in putting order into a chaos of conflicting facts and in guiding the court or a jury through it in a clear and persuasive manner. He might have risen, I have always thought, to distinction in the active practice of the courts; but circumstances drew him aside from forensic work, and the greater part of his time was devoted to the management of property in trust. I find, on looking at his books, that at the time

of his death he had charge of more than a hundred trusts, some of considerable size and some very small, though these last were often more troublesome, and of more importance to the persons interested, than were the larger ones. They were all, large and small, guarded with the same conscientious care. Mr. Ropes made no pretence to great financial knowledge or shrewdness, but his large experience, his prudence, his methodical habits of business, his common-sense carried his trusts through periods of business depression and failure with a success gratifying to himself and to his beneficiaries.

But Mr. Ropes was more remarkable as a man than as an historian or a lawyer. Nature had given him a strong constitution, but he was stricken in boyhood with a severe infirmity. The energy with which he determined in youth that this physical disability should not form an essential factor in his life, and should leave no mark on his naturally high spirit, excited the admiration of all who knew him.

But he was to be put to a severe test. He was a born soldier, and from boyhood had nursed his spirit on stories of martial deeds. The Civil War broke out. His brother, his nearest friends and companions were going into the army. Had he been an able-bodied man, he would have been among the foremost to seek a commission, not, like many of his contemporaries, merely from a sense of duty, but as seizing the opportunity to gratify his dearest wish and his highest ambition. He would have rejoiced to have

"*Drunk delight of battle with his peers.*"

But it could not be. He was absolutely debarred. Like Troubridge stranded in the Culloden at the battle of

the Nile, he was, in the words of Nelson, compelled to stand idly by, "while his more fortunate companions were in the full tide of happiness."

It was undoubtedly the greatest affliction of his life. To many men—I think I may say to most men—it would have brought bitterness or, at best, indifferenee to the struggle.

But Mr. Ropes's most striking quality was magnanimity. There was not a grain of envy in his whole nature. He could not himself go to the war; he would do all that was possible for those who did. In watching over their interests, in ministering to their wants, in writing innumerable letters, whose arrivals, as I can testify, were the best moments in the dull monotony of camp life, he was never weary. This feeling was consecrated by the death of his brother, who was killed at Gettysburg. And after the war closed, the interest which lay nearest to his heart was to perpetuate the memory of the events of a war in which he himself could not take part.

Mr. Ropes was a man of strong, very strong, religious feelings; he came from the purest of Puritan stock, but, like his exeellent father before him, he escaped many of the weaknesses of the Puritan character. He had no taste for small scruples. He was no aseetic. Within the limit of becoming mirth, he dearly loved a jest. He was in the best sense a man of the world. He "saw life steadily and saw it whole." He believed in the duty of cheerfulness. His virtues were positive, not negative. His thoughts were not how to mortify himself, but how to help others. His generosity was boundless, his charity unfailing. He had a keen insight into character, and knew well the faults and foibles of his friends, but he cared not to

dwell on them, and they made no difference in his affection.

He was in many ways an old-fashioned man. The modern schemes of general philanthropy he respected, but he took little interest in them, and felt no vocation to share in them. Many years ago he said to me that he believed the best way for him to aid his fellows was by helping individual young men. And thoroughly did he discharge the self-imposed duty and this not only, nor chiefly, by money, though he was a liberal giver, whose left hand knew not what his right hand did. To scores of men in trouble or temptation his sagacious counsel, his cheerful courage, his high sense of honor and duty, his unaffected sympathy have brought the needed strength. Many young men, all over the country, and some no longer young, can testify that they have had no friend like him. He had, indeed, a genius for friendship. Each of his friends felt that he was not like any other friend to Mr. Ropes, but that there was something special in their particular relation. And so there was. I was much struck by the truth of what a young man said to me since Mr. Ropes's death: "I have had many kind friends to sympathize with me in my troubles. They have tried to put themselves in my place, and think how *they* would have felt. Mr. Ropes was the only one who knew how *I* felt."

As might be supposed, Mr. Ropes was given to hospitality. For the last sixteen years of his life he was a householder, and I doubt if during that time there has been any table in Boston at which there have been so many eminent men seated, and so much good talk; and among the good talkers the host was one of the best. But he was no lion-hunter. The same kindness of heart marked his conduct there as elsewhere. If you dined

with Mr. Ropes, you might find yourself at table with an admiral, an ambassador, or an archbishop, but you might also find yourself with a young lieutenant or student.

Mr. Ropes felt that his life had been singularly fortunate and happy. And he was fortunate and happy in his end; with "no cold gradations of decay," death freed his strong soul from his frail body—"the nearest way."

ADDRESS

BY GEORGE B. CHASE

IN their fond recollections of John Ropes, gentlemen who preceded me have spoken of the many, many years they knew him. But in length of years, if not in daily intimate association with him, my own acquaintance with Ropes exceeded that of almost any person now living. Ropes and I were schoolfellows as far back as 1843, and both in that year and in 1844 we crossed the Common almost daily on our way to school in Chauncy Place. Few greater changes have occurred in the outward aspect of Boston in the last half-century than those we both lived to witness in the quiet streets through which we walked to and from school so long ago. I remember Ropes in those years as a bright, healthful boy and an especial favorite with the pretty assistant teacher who, living near him, usually accompanied us home from school.

Ropes's deformity, which in any account of this most notable man as he lived among us cannot be overlooked, so much did it seem to serve as a foil to the remarkable powers of his mind, was a curvature of the spine. This was thought to have begun about his thirteenth year and grew unobserved upon him until the return, after long absence, of a near relative, who at once noticed something amiss in the boy's appearance. Then it was found that the mischief already done could not be repaired. The attitude the boy was wont for some reason to assume, when bending over his book in long hours of reading or study, was supposed by his family to have been the cause of his malformation.

So much has been said here to-day, and so well said, in Ropes's memory that I touch but lightly on my own recollections of him. It must be nearly twenty years since John Ropes was appointed by the President a visitor to West Point. During the visitation of that year I arrived at the Point one afternoon, and, finding Ropes sitting in the shade of the parade ground, sat a long time with him before and after evening parade, as he talked of his impressions of the Academy. A few hours later I heard Professor Michie speak to the guests—some of them officers of high rank, and General Schofield was among them—whom he had gathered in his home that evening of Ropes's attainments. "He is a prodigy, an astonishing man," he said. "Why, gentlemen, he knows more about what happened in the field between '61 and '65 than all of us here together."

But one word more. In the spring of 1861 Ropes carried off the Bowdoin prize offered to resident graduates at Harvard for an essay on Mansel's "Limits of Religious Thought." Thus early in life did he show how largely the subject of religion had engaged his attention, and I believe myself well within the truth in saying, as I look back upon the life now closed, that few men trained to other pursuits have lived in our time among us who gave to religious study and meditation deeper or more sustained thought than the friend whose sudden taking off we deplore, and the charm of whose society we shall so long remember.

ADDRESS

BEFORE THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF

ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY JOHN FISKE

ADDRESS

BY JOHN FISKE

JOHN CODMAN ROPES was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, April 28, 1836, and died at his house, 99 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, early in the morning of October 28, 1899. He was elected a Fellow of the Academy in May, 1885. His father was William Ropes, a native of Salem, and his mother was Mary Anne Codman, daughter of Hon. John Codman. William Ropes was for some time engaged in business in St. Petersburg, but removed to London in 1837 and lived for some time at Islington, where a younger son, the late Dr. F. C. Ropes, was born.

After the return of the family to Boston John Ropes studied for a while at the Channcy Hall School, but at about the age of fourteen he was obliged to leave school on account of a physical infirmity. Up to that time he had been perfectly well and his figure was erect and shapely. But at about that time a slight curvature of the spine became apparent, which increased rapidly until it became a noticeable malformation. This physical deformity did not embarrass the action of heart or lungs, and during his entire life his health was remarkably good. But nevertheless the deformity was a very serious burden and prevented Ropes from engaging in activities which would have been most congenial to him. I might add that to those who loved him—and no one knew him who did not—this malformation was simply nonexistent. In sitting and talking with him one never thought of him as different from other men.

After leaving the Channcy Hall School, Ropes was for

a while under the care of Dr. Buckminster Brown. He then resumed his studies under Professor Goodwin, who acted as his private tutor and fitted him for college. He was graduated at Harvard in 1857 and soon afterwards entered the Law School, where he received his LL.B. in 1861. While he was proficient in the work of the Law School, it is interesting to observe that in that early time he also took a deep interest in questions of philosophy and religion. He was always a man of profoundly religious nature, with all the strength and earnestness of Puritanism, but without its ascetic features. In the year of his graduating at the Law School he received the Bowdoin prize for an essay on "The Limits of Religious Thought,"—a title which strongly suggests that his mind had been exercised by the famous book of Dean Mansel which we were all then reading. For a short time Ropes studied in the office of Peleg W. Chandler and George O. Shattuck. He was admitted to the bar November 28, 1861, and continued to practise law in Boston until the time of his death. In 1865 he formed a partnership with John Chipman Gray of the class of 1859; and thirteen years later W. C. Loring of the class of 1872 was added to the firm, which has since been known as Ropes, Gray and Loring. Ropes's professional work was almost entirely confined to the office. Possibly his physical difficulty may have had something to do with this. He had all the qualities which might have placed him in the very highest ranks as an advocate before the court. He had an almost infallible scent for the essential points in a case, he could disentangle the most complicated details, he could hunt for evidence with a kind of cosmic patience that took everything with the utmost deliberation but never let slip the

minutest detail, and he could marshal his arguments with a logical power that was equalled only by the artistic beauty of statement. To hear him argue any point was a genuine delight both to one's reason and to one's æsthetic sense. With all these rare endowments as an advocate, Ropes confined himself principally to business that could be done in the office, especially to the care and management of trust estates. At the time of his death there were more than a hundred trust estates, large and small, in his hands. He had long ago established his reputation as a safe person for taking care of money. He always showed sound judgment in making investments, and I suspect that one secret of his success was that minute and systematic attention to detail which characterized everything that he did.

The high qualities which might have made him a great advocate found a rich field for their employment in work done outside of office hours; and it is after all by that literary work that he will be longest and most widely known. The recollection of his professional work will of course pass away or be confined to very few persons after the present generation. But his contributions to history have excellences which are likely to secure for them a very long life. His published writings relate almost entirely to military history, in which his two chief topics were the career of Napoleon and the Civil War in America. I think there was in Ropes's nature an infusion of the true soldier. Had he been physically competent for service, he would probably have taken part in the Civil War, like his younger brother Henry, whose brief life was ended at Gettysburg. I fancy that the incapacity for service was a real grief to John Ropes, but it never seemed to disturb his serenity of spirit. If he

could not be useful in one way he could in another. If he could not follow in the footsteps of Alexander, he might at least in those of Arrian. The thought of writing a history of the Civil War was one which grew with him into a settled purpose, and very admirable was the sort of preparation which he made for it. It was natural that the subjects uppermost in his mind should come up for discussion in the pleasant evening hours at the club. Gradually there grew up a habit of holding meetings at his house, meetings in which veterans of whatever rank could compare their experiences and discuss mooted questions. Ropes strongly encouraged the preservation of every scrap of experience that could be put upon record, and thus grew up the habit of preparing historical papers to be read and discussed at these informal meetings. In this way Ropes became the founder of a most valuable institution,—the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts. For several years this body held its meetings at Ropes's house, where the speaker of the evening was apt to dine before the meeting and where the sessions were sure to end with a social glass and abounding good-fellowship. The publications of this Society, though few in number, are of great value. In recent years it has found a permanent habitation in one of the rooms of the Cadet Armory where Ropes, some time ago, placed the larger part of his valuable historical library.

One of the first literary results of these studies was an elaborate examination of the Virginia Campaign of General Pope in 1862, a summary of which was furnished by Ropes in his volume entitled "The Army under Pope," being one of the volumes of Scribner's series on the Civil War. Among other things it may be

said of this book that it completely exonerates General Fitz John Porter from the charges brought against him after the second battle of Bull Run and upon which he was so unjustly and cruelly condemned. I have been told that Ropes's weighty presentation of the case exerted no small influence upon the final verdict which declared General Porter innocent and went as far as possible toward repairing the grievous wrong that had been done. If no other result had come from founding the Military Historical Society, this alone would have more than justified its existence.

But Ropes's *magnum opus*, "The Story of the Civil War," was unfortunately never completed. It would have filled four volumes, and death removed the author soon after the publication of the second. The loss is one that can never be made good. Other writers of course may go over the period which Ropes failed to cover, but nobody can complete his book, for it is a case in which the writer's individual characteristics and personal experience are the all-important features. We have heard much in recent years of the advantages of the coöperative method in writing history, whereby a hundred experts may take each a small fragment of the ground to be covered. The merits of such a method are not denied, but it has one great defect: it gives us Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out. In an historical narrative nothing can make up for the personality of the narrator. A hundred experts on the Civil War would not fill Ropes's place for the simple reason that their hundred individual experiences cannot be combined in the same stream of consciousness. Ropes had gathered experience from every quarter; he had not only read pretty much everything worth reading on his subject, he had not only

delved with endless patience in the original documents, but he had obtained through social intercourse with soldiers now passed away a truly enormous fund of information, a great part of which has surely perished with him. I remember that during the last two or three years the thought sometimes occurred to him that he might not live to finish his book. He told me one day that he only lacked eight years of being threescore and ten, and that eight years were all too short a period for finishing the two volumes that remained to be done; he must therefore "scorn delight and live laborious days." He was always extremely fond of society; no man more keenly enjoyed a dinner-party or an evening at the club, and I can testify that sometimes after club hours were over we used to enjoy prolonging our friendly chat quite into the morning hours; but in these latter days Ropes became much more chary of his time and subjected himself to a kind of discipline in order that his work might be finished.

In another direction and in dealing with a more limited theme, he achieved a finished piece of work. He had always entertained a warm admiration for the First Napoleon. It was natural that such an acute military critic should admire such transcendent military genius. But Ropes carried his admiration to an extent with which not all his friends found it easy to sympathize. In his little book entitled "The First Napoleon" Ropes appears as the great Corsican's advocate, and his case is presented with consummate skill. It has all the more weight because the author is far too skilful to weaken his case by over statement or by any too conspicuous warmth of enthusiasm. It is a masterly piece of writing, although in its philosophic grasp of the man and the

period it is surely far inferior to the book published about the same time by the late Sir John Seeley.

It was in relation to the Waterloo Campaign that Ropes produced the completely finished work already alluded to. No battle of the nineteenth century has called for so much discussion as Waterloo; and most of the discussion has centred about the question, "Why did Napoleon lose the battle?" The books on this subject are legion, and they present us with an English view of the situation and a Prussian view, and ever so many French views, according to the political and personal predilections of the writers. Usually we find some particular antecedent selected as explaining the mighty result, while other antecedents receive inadequate attention or are passed over. One writer is impressed with the inefficiency of Grouchy, another one traces the catastrophe to the aimless wanderings of Erlon's corps on the sixteenth of June, and so on. But in Ropes's monograph what chiefly impresses us is the fact that he weighs every circumstance with the greatest care and puts real mental effort into the work of estimating the precise share which each circumstance took in the general mass of causation. In the first place the quality of the French army is duly considered and compared with the quality of the allied forces. Then such facts as the Emperor having Soult for Chief of Staff, an unaccustomed position for that able marshal, his feeling it necessary to leave at Paris the invincible Davoust, and other like circumstances, receive due attention. The mysterious movements of Erlon, which prevented his being of any use either to Ney at Quatre Bras or to Napoleon at Ligny, are more acutely analyzed than in any other book. Then the consequences of the very incomplete de-

feat of Blücher on the sixteenth are carefully considered. Then Napoléon's great and unusual blunder in assuming an eastward retreat for the Prussians and acting upon the assumption without verifying it, is properly characterized. The share wrought by the muddy roads and the rains is not forgotten, nor the physical weaknesses which hampered the great general and allowed him now and then to be caught napping for a moment; the masterly position taken by Wellington; the effects of the topography; the extent to which the Emperor's attention was diverted early in the afternoon in the direction of Planchenoit,—not one of these points is forgotten or slurred over. It is this minute quantitative consideration of details that impresses upon Ropes's historical writings their truly scientific character, and no theme could have been better calculated to exhibit it in its perfection than the campaign of Waterloo. One cannot read the book carefully without feeling that for once in the world something has been done so exhaustively that it will not need to be done again. It would seem almost impossible for the most fertile mind to offer a suggestion of anything actual, probable, or possible about Waterloo that our author has not already brought forward and considered. Those who write such books are few, and to study them is a great and profitable stimulus. As this monograph on Waterloo related to a subject already well understood in Europe, it immediately gave Ropes a high reputation in European circles, and I believe he is regarded by experts as one of the soundest military critics since the days of Jomini.

A MEMORIAL SKETCH

BY A. J. C. SOWDON

[*Reprinted from "Time and the Hour," Boston, November 4, 1899*]

A MEMORIAL SKETCH

BY A. J. C. SOWDON

A LIFE of singular strength and beauty has passed from mortal vision. The great company of friends and mourners which filled Trinity Church last Monday testified to the respect and affection in which John Codman Ropes was held in this community. He was only a private citizen, holding no official position; had no political influence; belonged to no popular or secret societies; and never had descended to any ignoble arts which attract popular interest and approval. During these many years he has gone in and out among us, simply doing the duties and living the life of a good citizen, as he understood them. But all the while he was making friends who loved him as few men are loved, and it has been said that his death has occasioned a public sorrow unknown since the death of his friend Phillips Brooks.

William Ropes, the father, was a man of very strong character, and one of the best types of old-time merchants and ship-owners. He had large dealings with London and St. Petersburg, and his mind and range of ideas had widened accordingly. The mother, a daughter of Hon. John Codman and a sister of Rev. Dr. Codman of Dorchester, was a woman of strong convictions, much piety, and a gentle, motherly nature. Together they presided over a home of sweetness and refinement, precisely the kind of home for the upbuilding of character.

In the year 1853 John and his brother Francis entered Harvard College. John was the more intellectual and the more popular of the two, although in subse-

quent years Francis attained distinction as a physician. John was even as a Freshman a remarkable youth, pure in morals and speech, bright, intelligent, well-read, very thoughtful and conscientious, and wise beyond his years. Even in those early years he was well versed in Napoleonic lore, while his knowledge of general history was large, exact, and well digested. At graduation he took high rank, and was probably the most popular man in the class of 1857.

Among his first acts after graduating was to found a Dinner Club among his classmates. This club has flourished greatly, even to the present time, but its ranks are sadly thinned. Partly with a sense of humor, it was named for him, and called the Jacobite Club. Its dinners have been held monthly, except in summer, and among those who once added a charm to its meetings were the late Robert Dickson Smith, James J. Storrow, Stanton Blake, Charles F. Walcott, James Amory Perkins, Howard Dwight, Ezra Dyer, George McKean Folsom, and George M. Barnard. With these meetings Ropes never allowed any engagement to interfere in the forty-two years of its existence.

John Ropes came naturally by his love of military history. It began in college, but it received a mighty stimulant in the opening and progress of the Civil War, and the departure of so many of his friends for the army. Who of those young Harvard soldiers did he not know? And with many he kept up a lively correspondence during the entire war. His youngest brother, Henry (Harvard, 1862), was killed at Gettysburg, and this great affliction to him seemed only to increase his hunger for military facts and study. More and more he withdrew from society, of which he was very fond, and took up

those serious studies which became his life's work. His subsequent magazine articles and histories upon Napoleon, Waterloo, our Civil War, and kindred topics have given him a wide reputation as a historian and military critic, and rendered him exceedingly popular with both soldiers and scholars. He was the founder of the Military Historical Society of this State, and enjoyed the distinction of being one of the very few civilian members of the Commandery of the Loyal Legion. His acquaintance among public men was very large, especially military men, and many a battle of the Civil War has been fought over again at his dinner-table. His full and exact knowledge has sometimes enabled him to instruct officers about the battles they had engaged in, even as to their own positions on the field of action.

But how shall we speak of the rare charm of this man's personality, which was so unique in our community? He was so intelligent, so sensible, so broad-minded, so enthusiastic! He had for years a reputation as a talker, a conversationalist, and nobody could listen to him without being captivated. He was intensely vigorous and manly. He was singularly courteous, and never unfairly stated the position of his adversary, even in the heat of high debate. Those who were privileged to share his friendship can recall nothing finer than hours passed at his hospitable board or around the fire in his library. These were indeed *noctes ambrosianæ*, and never to be forgotten. His insight into character and his ability to analyze it were very delightful, while his wit and his love of good stories charmed his friends. He was a perfectly sane and wholesome man, with no fads and with no patience for cranks or well-meaning fools. He could not endure bores. His plain speaking was refreshing, his

righteous indignation was something to remember, and no one ever left his presence without feeling that he had been in the company of a strong man.

Mr. Ropes seemed to win the esteem of all who met him. To his nearest friends he was tender and generous, for his nature was lovable and his heart pure and warm. With no show of ever giving, and rather a dislike of public philanthropists, he was one of the constant givers in this city, and hundreds could testify to his generous and unobtrusive benefactions. In early life he came out of Congregationalism into what he grew to regard as the fresher and sunnier atmosphere of the Episcopal church, and became the close friend and trusted adviser of Bishops Brooks and Lawrence and of his own rector, Dr. Donald. Many of his most intimate friends were among the clergy, whose society he greatly enjoyed, and were confined to no denomination. He deplored sectarian divisions, and yet he dearly loved theological inquiry. In his early youth he took the Harvard Graduate prize for the best essay upon Mansel's "Limits of Religious Thought." His religious life was deep and earnest. His conversations upon sacred themes showed profound reverence and a critical and lifelong study. He seemed familiar with every phase of religious thought and modern theological research; he searched for the truth and did not fear to face it wheresoever he found it. His knowledge of the Bible was not less remarkable than the simplicity, beauty, and strength of his faith. To listen to him was indeed a spiritual uplift.

He knew no fear. He led the first Republican revolt in Massachusetts in 1876 as head of the Bristow Club, and was the first president of the first Civil-Service Reform Club in this State. He deprecated the present con-

dition of political parties, and always asserted his right to vote as he chose.

In this brief tribute many things are left for others to speak of. In his profession as a lawyer he took high rank, and was the prudent and trusted counsellor. As a neighbor and a familiar figure in our streets men grew to know him and respect him. Little did they know how this busy man loved children and young people and gathered them about him and entertained them; and how he advised and helped young men to a higher living. In his heart he was as young as any of them, and he found great happiness in their company.

This beautiful and helpful life is ended, and oh, the difference it will make to so many in the community! The final summons, which came to him alone, suddenly, at the midnight hour, doubtless found him ready. Death never finds such a man unprepared.

"E'en as he trod that day to God,
So walked he from his birth,
In simpleness and gentleness,
And honor and clean mirth."

RESOLUTIONS
OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS by the death of John Codman Ropes on October 28, 1899, we lost one of our most widely known and best beloved members, we place on record this brief memorial of his professional work.

Mr. Ropes was a man of such varied talents and felt so strong an interest in matters outside of law, and devoted himself with such untiring industry to everything he undertook, that he became a conspicuous literary and social leader, and there is, perhaps, danger that our successors, and even his contemporaries, may, for that reason, fail to appreciate what he did and was in the strict line of his profession. It is for this Association to see that the work to which he gave the best of his time and thought is faithfully recorded.

He was born April 28, 1836, in St. Petersburg, where the house of William Ropes and Company had recently been founded by his father, who belonged to an old Salem family.

When he was five years old his family returned to Boston. He was educated here and in 1857 was graduated from Harvard College. He studied law at the Harvard Law School and afterwards in the office of Chandler and Shattuck.

After his admission to the bar he occupied for a few years an office with Robert M. Morse.

At the close of the Civil War he and his friend John C. Gray formed the firm of Ropes and Gray. In 1878

William Caleb Loring, now Mr. Justice Loring, became a member of this firm, and the name was changed to Ropes, Gray and Loring.

For several years after 1866, Mr. Ropes was Assistant United States District Attorney for the district of Massachusetts, and he was afterwards offered the position of Assistant United States Attorney General by his friend Mr. Devens, but this he declined.

While in the district attorney's office, he was actively engaged in the trial of the civil cases in which the government was interested, and this part of the work fell chiefly to him.

In connection with Mr. Gray he founded the American Law Review, which they carried on until its reputation was established and its success assured.

When he left the district attorney's office he was already much sought after as a trustee and a manager of property, but he continued for many years to keep up his general practice, and only withdrew from the trial of cases as the pressure of other business forced him so to do.

He keenly enjoyed the struggle of a well-contested lawsuit, and on several occasions continued the battle with wonderful courage and persistency after it seemed hopeless to others. His unflagging industry and zeal were lavished on the preparation of his briefs and arguments, and they displayed a rare power of understanding confused and complicated facts and ideas and giving them an orderly, simple, and intelligible form.

He was prompt in deciding and acting, and in the management of the large interests intrusted to him he showed great practical common sense and very sound judgment. His great kindness of heart endeared him to

his clients and led him to give the same attention to the small matters brought to him by the widow and the orphan as to large affairs of business.

He was the friend and adviser of hundreds. He took a personal interest in all their problems, and no one did more of that important work of the lawyer whereby by judicious advice and timely action costly litigation is prevented.

No trait of his character was more striking than his love for young men, and this is especially noticeable in his relations with the younger lawyers. For many years he had always one or more students in his office, and his treatment of them was invariably considerate and his intercourse most helpful. One and all they became his warm personal friends. At the time of his death no man at the bar was more generally beloved than he.

He was very public spirited, but the numerous bodies, religious, literary, and social, to which he gave so much of his time, have severally borne their testimony to his work, and it is not necessary to speak of them here. But we cannot omit a reference to his services as a member of the council and of the committee of grievances of this Association during its early years.

It was most important that the first efforts of this Association to purify and keep up the standard of the bar should be judicious and successful. He did his full share of this trying work, and to its success his good judgment and courage greatly contributed.

Solomon Lincoln.
J. L. Stackpole.
Charles P. Greenough.
William L. Putnam.
Robert S. Gorham.

ADDRESS

BY J. LEWIS STACKPOLE

MR. PUTNAM'S resolutions are admirably conceived and yet in seconding them I must ask a few minutes' indulgence to add a word or two of my own.

John Ropes was a classmate of mine and a lifelong friend for nearly half a century, and his nature was so strong, so vigorous, so full of life, that it seems hard to realize that I shall see him no more.

Early in our college life he developed the maturity of thought, the independence, the grasp of every subject that interested him, which characterized his later years. As an editor of the Harvard Magazine he grappled with the vital topics of the day, and soon after graduation took the resident graduate's prize for an essay on "The Limits of Religious Thought," a subject on which, I fancy, most of us had but few and superficial ideas.

So it was with him through all his life. He was a strong, bold, independent thinker, an earnest and thorough advocate of the side of the question which he espoused.

These qualities he carried into his practice of the profession of the law, and during his term of service in courts they made him a valuable counsellor and a successful advocate. He had the eloquence which came from a complete confidence in the cause he advocated, and his sound good sense led him to reject all arguments that were not entirely apposite to the cause under consideration.

While law was his vocation, he had not a few avocations, the chiefest among them the study and criticism

of military campaigns. It is not too much to say that among American military critics he stands to-day *facile princeps*. His knowledge of the campaigns of the Emperor Napoleon — his single hero worship — was profound and accurate, and his study of the campaign of Waterloo has been pronounced by competent judges, both English and French, to be the best work ever written on that famous battle. His acquaintance with the battles of the Civil War, learned from accounts given him directly by the most distinguished officers, both of the United States army and on the Confederate side, embraced the whole of that great conflict. Two volumes on this subject he had given to the world. His mind was full for writing the rest.

He was prepared to pass judgment on many vexed and long-debated questions, and his work, alas, can no more be completed by another than the place of the judge who has heard the evidence and arguments in a long and complicated case can be filled by a stranger.

John Ropes was a most sociable man in the highest sense of the term. His friends were numberless, from all ranks, from all classes, young and old, rich and poor. To be admitted to his friendship was a distinct and happy privilege.

His talk was always rich and entertaining. He had strong, interesting views on every subject he touched, and at times I have thought he resembled not a little the great lexicographer,—but only in the latter's most genial moments. How many delightful nights I can look back upon when,

"*Long, long through the hours, and the night and the chimes,*
We talked of old books and old friends and old times,"

for he was no advocate of early bed, and not seldom in

that pleasant country house of his at York, with the lines of the famous Latin bard over the portal, the glow in the east sent us to bed!

"*Dum rediens fugat astra Phœbus*,"

as the same poet hath it.

A single word more. It has been my privilege to take part in two other meetings of this Association, called upon the deaths of two other classmates—the genial and witty Robert Smith, the profound, clear-headed James Storrow. Our circle is again broken by the loss of our much-loved John Ropes.

I do no injustice to those who remain—and they are unknown neither to the profession nor the country—by saying that the arrows of death have struck our most shining marks.

"*Those friends of mine*
Who are no longer here, the noble three
Who half my life were more than friends to me
And whose discourse was like a generous wine."

Life ceases to be quite the same when those who contributed to make it what it was are gone. And though we put on a good face and keep a good courage, one that is left behind may be pardoned when he thinks of Ropes for again quoting the same great poet:—

"*Good-night, good-night, as we so oft have said*
Beneath thy roof at midnight, in the days
That are no more and shall no more return.
Thou hast taken thy lamp and gone to bed;
I stay a little longer, as one stays
To cover up the embers that still burn."

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE TWENTIETH REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE TWENTIETH REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

THE members of the Twentieth Regiment Association wish to express their grief at the death of their associate brother, Mr. John C. Ropes, so far as a few inadequate words may do so. They know that the loss was felt by the whole city, and far beyond its limits to an extraordinary degree, but they believe that Mr. Ropes's connection with themselves had in it something singular, notwithstanding the many and close ties by which he was bound. He was the first man whose membership of the Association was not based upon service in the field, yet he seemed quite as much a member as the veterans of the great war. Only obstacles which no will or courage could surmount kept him from our battles, and that he was kept from them was the greatest grief of his life. His brother was killed in the front of the regiment at Gettysburg. He himself was the intimate of every man of the Twentieth who wished the precious gift of a friendship which, without losing nice discrimination, saw the best side of all he met. He knew the story of the regiment as did no one else. He set us all an example of cheerful, ever gay courage in facing misfortune, of gallantry in making the most of facts as they were, instead of sighing for those which were not, of high resolve in homely attitude, that taught men who in their youth were schooled in war to know and to love better the very virtues which it is the glory of war to teach. The memory of him, like that of Colonel Lee, always will be one of the great lights in a constellation that has nearly set: the Twentieth Regi-

ment of Massachusetts Volunteers in the war which he was narrating so brilliantly when he died.

For the Regiment,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
GUSTAVE MAGNITZKY
EDWARD B. ROBINS
} *Committee.*

January 1, 1900.

RESOLUTIONS
OF THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS

THE Military Historical Society of Massachusetts desire to place on record the love which its members one and all felt for their friend, the founder of this Society, the late John Codman Ropes, their deep sense of gratitude for his constant interest and benefactions, and their sorrow for his loss.

Nearly one quarter of a century has passed since Mr. Ropes founded this Society. Until less than five years ago all its meetings were held in his house, and its members entertained by him with generous hospitality.

Upon its establishment in its present quarters Mr. Ropes presented it with his valuable library on the Civil War, numbering about five hundred volumes, his unique collection of works on the Emperor Napoleon, nearly four hundred volumes in all, many works on general military subjects, about one thousand prints, over one hundred and fifty medals, besides many beautiful bronzes and portraits. In addition to these gifts the amount of money contributed by Mr. Ropes to the Society, besides ordinary fees and dues, exceeds the total amount of dues and contributions paid by all the other members during all these twenty-five years, and is over twelve thousand five hundred dollars. But these material contributions, great as they are, are far from representing all for which this Society owes to Mr. Ropes its enduring gratitude. From the earliest beginning down to the day of his death his interest never flagged. The friendship of many distinguished soldiers, both of the

United States Army and upon the Confederate side, procured the most interesting essays upon the principal events of the Civil War, while his intimate knowledge of the subject admirably directed the investigations of other writers. Last, but not least, by his wise advice, his cordial encouragement, and his never ending hospitality, he promoted in a thousand ways our prosperity; and it is not too much to say that whatever success the Military Historical Society has earned is due to the wisdom, the devotion, and the perseverance of John Codman Ropes. Nor is it unfitting in this place to resolve, that if our gratitude is to be other than hollow, it will be best shown by continuing the work which he has so generously entrusted to us, so that it may remain a permanent monument to his memory.

Mr. Ropes showed us the way to the research of military history, and conferred lustre upon the Society by his works upon military subjects. Besides the many papers read by him, and numerous articles contributed to reviews, his work on the "Army under Pope" in the "Campaigns of the Civil War," that on "The First Napoleon," his exhaustive study entitled "The Campaign of Waterloo," and his unfinished "Story of the Civil War" are justly regarded as standard works of the highest authority. Those of us who served in the War of the Rebellion well know that, but for a physical infirmity, he would have been among us, and that his constant and diligent inquiry into the true history of that period had its source in a patriotism as pure and devoted as inspired those who had an actual share in the events which his pen has so well described.

Above and beyond all it is our privilege to hold in our memories a friend, upon whose kind heart we could

always rely, whose cordial smile lit up our meetings, whose wise advice was ever at our service, and whose benefactions conferred happiness upon many unnumbered and unknown. The young especially found in him a steadfast friend and wise adviser. Imbued with deep religious feeling he was unhampered by prejudice or intolerance. The memory of him must always be with us as of an able, upright, pure man,—individual in his character, strong in his convictions, but with a liberality that tempered his judgment, and a tenderness that embraced all that was human.

He had lived his life. The respect of the community was his. The love of friends followed him. Well prepared for death, he doubtless had wished that he might be spared to finish that work, to which he had given so many hours,—so much thought, that "magnum opus" long postponed in order to have the last word of judgment on so many vexed questions, and therefore so impossible of completion except by the author himself. But it was otherwise ordained. On the day preceding the night attack of fatal illness he had worked hard and long on the pages of this book, nor knew how soon it might be said

"the hand lies cold
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,
And left the tale half told.

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain!"

November 7, 1899.

L. of C.

RESOLUTIONS

OF

THE COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION

OF THE UNITED STATES

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES

JOHN CODMAN ROPES, a gentleman who in civil life during the Rebellion was specially distinguished for conspicuous and consistent loyalty. Earnest in loyal influence and in assistance to troops in the field; an exceptionally diligent student and able writer on the history of the war.

This Commandery has lost many distinguished companions whose lives were most valuable to our country, and were full of honors which shed a lustre upon our association, but none more full of the martial spirit than the life of John Codman Ropes.

Prevented by physical disability from taking active service in the field with the other young men who were his companions and friends, he bore his disappointment with manly courage and extraordinary cheerfulness. His interest in the Civil War was intensified by the loss of his brother, who was an officer in the Twentieth Massachusetts Infantry and was killed at Gettysburg; and his natural love of study and investigation led his mind, trained by his legal education and practice, in the direction of military science. Refusing most of the social opportunities which surrounded him, he devoted every moment of his time which could be spared from his profession, in which he was eminently successful, to hard work in the study of military movements and estimates of the success or failure of officers and soldiers engaged. We have had no military writer who displayed

more love of his subject or more devotion and intelligence in developing the movements of an army, the capacity of its commanders, and the value of its soldiers. His acquaintance and friendship with many of the leaders on both sides of our conflict gave him opportunities for information unexcelled by any military writer upon the subject, so that when these studies came to be written out, his books were a monument of patient and skilful endeavor, and the charm of his composition impressed itself upon every reader. His reputation as an able writer and critic upon great military events is fully established both at home and abroad.

His disposition was most kindly, and those of us who were honored by his intimacy remember no more loyal or affectionate friend. His interest in young men and their pursuits was especially marked, and many of our young companions will have the recollection of his kindness and hospitality as one of their choicest remembrances.

The Commandery of Massachusetts joins its voice in tribute and records in tender remembrance that his memory will ever rest in all hearts as that of the true soldier and honorable high-minded man, who brought credit and honor to the Order.

RESOLUTIONS
OF THE VESTRY OF TRINITY CHURCH
IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE VESTRY OF TRINITY CHURCH IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

MR. ROPES was for many years an honored and useful member of this Vestry and throughout his long service illustrated the qualities of character which endear men to their fellows. He was a man of unstained integrity, of singular warmth of heart, of brilliant mind, and of generous impulses. He therefore won both respect and love. Few men have so signally illustrated a genius for friendship, none has exercised a wider, saner, or more powerful influence over educated young men. His life was so full, his mind so hospitable to all knowledge, his sympathies so wide, that he gathered about him and knit to him in abiding bonds of friendship, men of diverse interests and occupations. He lived, as few men have ever lived, successfully in two worlds: the world of men, affairs, pleasure, and work; the world of reverence, faith, and communion with God. He was determined to know as much about this world as he could; so he became an able lawyer, a learned historian, a brilliant, accomplished member of society. He was equally determined to know as much about God as he could; so he became a trained theologian and a reverent follower of Jesus Christ. He loved and served his Church because it made him a better man, deepened his trust in Jesus Christ, and strengthened his belief in immortality. He intelligently prized, regularly and devoutly received, the Sacrament, because it brought him consciously into the presence of God.

His was a courageous, industrious, fruitful, and faithful life. We his associates and friends will long and gratefully remember his services to Trinity Church and the City of Boston.

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